THE EAST INDIAN, OR CLIFFORD PRIORY.

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF ROSE-MOUNT CASTLE, POEMS, &c.

VOLUME III.

Sad is the change, from Pleaſure's gayeſt ſcenes,
To the ſepulchral gloom of dreary vaults,
Where the long-buried dead in ſilence ſleep;
Nor are leſs drear the deſolated rooms,
Where Melancholy waves her ebon wand,
Un-nerves the frame, and chills the trembling ſoul,
With fancied ſpectres and terrific ſounds.

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THE

EAST INDIAN,

OR

CLIFFORD PRIORY.

CHAP. I.

AN OLD BALLAD.

WHEN Elinor beheld the morning dawn, her firſt deſign was to weed ſome part of the garden: but, though the preceding day had been warm and fine, yet when ſhe went to her cloſet

window, ſhe ſaw the ground covered with a hoar froſt, ſo that ſhe was obliged to poſtpone her out-of-door-work, till the ſun had ſoftened the earth: nor could ſhe tune the inſtruments leſt the ſound ſhould diſturb her uncle. She got up to her chamber window, but the miſt was not ſufficiently diſpelled for her to take a ſketch of the proſpect. She jumped down and opened the drawers of the commode, and a large cheſt of drawers which alſo ſtood in the chamber, and found they contained a great quantity of very rich old faſhioned clothes and linen. The latter was a perfect yellow like the finer ſort, and laces in the cloſet. She did not unfold any thing, as her own ſtock of wearing apparel rendered every addition unneceſſary for the preſent. Indeed her inclination led her to give all that ſhe could not wear to Rachel, who, ſhe thought, had an undoubted right to them.

But,

But, as Sir Gervas had not given them to her in ſo many years, ſhe feared he would be very much offended, and think ſhe ſlighted his preſent, if he were to know ſhe had given any part of it away. Then, recollecting her father's debts, ſhe conſidered that it was her duty to be *juſt*, before ſhe dared be *generous*.

Chilled with looking over the damp things, poor Elinor ſhivering with cold, earneſtly wiſhed that ſome good logs were blazing in her great uſeleſs chimney. Born in Bengal, ſhe felt the ſharp air of a froſty morning more ſeverely than ſhe would, had ſhe been a native of England. Her father and aunt being alſo natives of that hot climate, had every poſſible care taken to render the houſe in Portman-ſquare warm. How great was the difference between that and Clifford Priory, where the ſea-

breezes continually whiſtled through the ill-cloſed caſements of uncarpeted rooms and down the ſpacious chimneys that had not been cheered by an enlivening blaze for many years.

Elinor went down ſtairs, in order to warm her benumbed fingers by the kitchen fire, but Rachel was not up, and the cold embers were ſcattered on the hearth. She looked in the ſtudy, hoping that Jenkins had made a fire there, ready for her uncle, who ſometimes aroſe very early; but there ſhe was alſo diſappointed, and returned to her apartment ſick and ſpiritleſs; for the morning was too miſty for her to walk herſelf into animation. She took out of the deſk a manuſcript that ſhe had opened the day before; but, not having then time to read it, was glad ſhe recollected it now, as ſhe thought it ſeemed, by the few lines ſhe peruſed, an intereſting

old ballad; and ſitting down in the warmeſt corner ſhe could find, read the following ballad.

BERTHA AND EDWY.

Returning with a wand'ring lamb,
All in the heat of day,
Fair Bertha, thro' the foreſt's ſhade,
Purſued her winding way.

Her auburn treſſes looſely wav'd
Beneath her hat of green,
That ſcorn'd to hide her lovely face,
For lovelier ne'er was ſeen.

No uncouth garments long and wide
Encumber'd this fair maid;
She lightly tripp'd, and gaily ſung,
And with the lambkin play'd.

A diſmal groan now check'd her ſong,
She ſtarted at the ſound,
And ſaw in huntſman's habit clad
A youth lie on the ground.

There, like a pallid corſe he lay,
His boar-ſpear by his ſide;
And from his deeply-wounded arm
Faſt flow'd the crimſon tide.

"Alas! alas! poor bleeding youth!
Thy wound I'll try to bind;
I cannot leave thee dying here,
I am not ſo unkind."

Then, kneeling by the wounded man,
She ripp'd his ſleeve of green,
And in his arm the fatal marks
Of ſavage tuſks were ſeen.

With haſte, his cravat ſhe untied,
Of linen ſoft and fine,
And that around the bleeding arm
Did pitying Bertha twine.

"Ah! what avails my tender care!
The hapleſs youth is *dead*———
No—no—he breathes—I'll ſit me down
And gently raiſe his head.

"Poor helpleſs youth! thy cold pale face
Shall reſt on Bertha's knee;
'Tis pity thou ſhould'ſt die ſo ſoon!
I'll pray to heaven for thee.

"Ah me! what racking pain I feel!
Where am I—tell me where?"
"Be calm—be calm—O reſt a while—
Thy wounds will bleed, I fear!"

" Sweet angel yes—thy words are balm,
Thus ever let me reſt!
Nor pain—nor ſickneſs can I feel,
Reclining on thy breaſt."

" O youth! I found thee dying here;
Kind heav'n has heard my prayer.
Reſtor'd thee once again to life,
To bleſs thy parent's dear.

" Now, if returning ſtrength can aid,
Aſſiſted by my arm,
I'll lead thee gently to my cot
And ſtrive thy pain to charm.

" For well I know, to tune the lute
To ſweetly penſive ſtrains;
And well I know ſoft ditties ſad
Of hapleſs nymphs and ſwains.

" My nurſe, a very kind old dame,
Will tend thee day and night,
And dreſs with ſkill thy wounded arm:
Good deeds are her delight.

" Now tell me, youth, and tell me true,
Thy family and name?
If noble, we'll reſpect and love,
If poor, we'll do the ſame.

" Let worth innate adorn thy ſoul;
Thy actions, honor guide;
Greater art thou, if cottage born,
Than if to kings allied."

" Enchanting maid! thy ſenſe refin'd
So charms my raviſh'd heart;
If once an inmate of thy cot,
O how ſhall I depart!

" Yet Edwy, hapleſs orphan youth,
As poor as youth can be,
Will not preſume, O peerleſs maid!
To raiſe his thoughts to thee.

" But, if to life and health reſtor'd,
A pilgrimage I'll go,
To pray for my preſerver's bliſs,
Tho' doom'd myſelf to woe,

" Alas! a lowly vaſſal I,
And ſerve a baron bold,
Whoſe haughty boſom ſwells with pride,
As ſwell his bags with gold.

" This morn he bad me hunt the boar,
Nor ever more appear
Within his walls, unleſs I brought
The boar's head on my ſpear.

" And,

" And, ere the beams of riſing day
Gave luſtre to the dew,
My ſwift ſteps, thro' the foreſt wide,
The ſavage beaſt purſue.

" 'Till tangled in a thorny dell,
He could no farther go;
But ſudden turn'd with furious rage,
And ſeiz'd upon his foe.

" Short'ning my ſpear, I fix'd it deep
Within his ſhaggy ſide:
The ſavage felt the mortal wound—
Unloos'd his tuſks—and died.

" And there, among the brambles rude,
I left the wild-boar ſlain,
And to the caſtle bent my way,
But ſunk, oppreſs'd by pain."

" Ah! ſure, thy guardian angel led
This wanton lamb a ſtray,
Or Bertha ne'er had paſs'd the ſpot
Where wounded Edwy lay.

" The bloſſom'd myrtle ſcents the gale,
Sweet roſe-leaves ſtrew the ground,
And now behold the fragrant ſhrubs,
That fence my cottage round.

" And there, poor weary youth, ſhalt thou
Repoſe thy drooping head
In peace, tho' on a pallet rude;
It was my father's bed!

" Tho' in this rural vale he dwelt,
A valiant knight was he;
Till, worn with toil, he ſpent his days
With ſolitude and me.

" And oft he ſaid : ' whene'er thou find'ſt
An object in diſtreſs,
Humanity muſt baniſh fear
And teach thee to redreſs.

" 'Tis only to the feeble mind
Cold caution cries, " beware :"
Act right, my child, and firmly truſt
In heav'n's protecting care.'

" For thee, an unknown wounded youth,
An orphan too, and poor,
Thus did Sir Oſwald bid me ope
His hoſpitable door."

The grateful Edwy preſt her hand,
But when he ſtrove to ſpeak,
The accents faulter'd on his tongue
And paler grew his cheek.

Three tedious days in doubtful ſtate,
The languid Edwy lay;
While, ever watching, by his ſide,
Did Bertha weep and pray.

Her nurſe cull'd ev'ry healing plant,
From garden and from field,
And long experienced in their uſe,
Soon made the fever yield.

And now with thankful hearts they ſee,
On each returning morn,
Still more and more the glow of health
Young Edwy's cheeks adorn.

And Bertha, to amuſe his mind,
Exerted all her pow'r:
She talk'd, ſhe read, ſhe play'd, ſhe ſung,
To cheer each paſſing hour.

Yet,

Yet, ſtill ſhe ſaw, and griev'd to ſee
Dark ſorrow gloom his brow,
And gently aſk'd—" O Edwy ſay!
What pangs afflict thee now?"

" Ah! Bertha, Bertha, deareſt maid!
To leave thee rends my heart!
Yet, know before to-morrow dawns,
Sad Edwy muſt depart."

" *To-morrow,* Edwy, muſt thou go?
O no! it cannot be!
Sure, thou wilt ſtay another week,
One more ſhort week with me."

" With thee for ever could I ſtay!
But, Oh! my Bertha dear,
I am compell'd by rigid fate
To leave thee one long year."

" To parents, Edwy, well I know
Obedience muſt be paid:
But art not thou an orphan youth,
And I an orphan maid?

" Haſt thou not ſeen what plenty ſprings
Around may peaceful cot?
Sir Oſwald dwelt contented here
And bleſt his humble lot."

" Bertha," he ſaid, " ne'er wiſh to wed
A man of high degree;
The great will ſcorn this calm retreat,
And, wanting fortune, thee.

" But, ſhould'ſt thou meet a worthy youth,
Oppreſs'd by fortune's frown,
Whoſe eyes expreſſive tell the love
He humbly fears to own,

" If

" If mutual paſſion warm thine heart,
Reward his generous flame,
And give, my Bertha, freely give
The hand he dares not claim."

" Thou, Edwy, art that humble youth,
Then take my willing hand:
Take it, as brave Sir Oſwald's gift,
With all his fertile lands."

" When Bertha dear preſerved my life,
I made a ſolemn vow;
Nor dare I, for my honor's ſake,
Preſume to break it now.

" Nor will I let thee plight thy troth
To one ſo poor as me:
No, generous maid! 'tis Edwy's pride
To leave fair Bertha *free*.

" One

" One parting kiſs—one kind embrace—
My life—my ſoul's delight—
Oh 'tis too much !—we'll meet again—
My only love, good night."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

BERTHA AND EDWY.

SECOND PART.

Before the ſun poor Bertha roſe,
To bid her gueſt farewell;
But he was gone—and faſt the tears
On her fair boſom fell.

Now from the fold her pet lamb came.
His miſtreſs fair to meet,
Who wept the more, when ſhe beheld
Him play around her feet.

"Ah!

" Ah! little lamb, our Edwy's gone,
How can'ſt thou be ſo gay?
He will not pat thy fleecy ſides;
Alas! he's far away!

" Yet, I will love thee, lambkin dear,
Thou didſt my footſteps guide,
To give my Edwy timely aid,
Who, but for thee, had died.

" For that, I'll call thee Edwy's friend,
And deck thy fleece with flow'rs;
Poor Edwy's friend, thou ſhalt be mine
And ſoothe my lonely hours."

Now, at the tree where Edwy fell
She formed a myrtle bow'r,
And 'midſt the verdant glaſs he preſt
She planted many a flow'r.

The tree, on which ſhe carved his name,
Sweet Jeſs'mine did entwine,
And Bertha pray'd and Bertha vow'd
At this Love's ſacred ſhrine.

One morn, repairing to her bow'r,
She met a little page,
Who ſtrove by many courtly arts
Her converſe to engage.

"Away, away, my pretty boy;
Intrude not on the walk
Of one whoſe mind is fill'd with grief,
Nor heeds thy lively talk."

"I came to make thine heart right-glad
And baniſh every woe;
With me to my moſt potent Lord,
Fair Lady, thou muſt go."

"Away,

"Away, away, thou little page;
I will not go with thee;
Thy Lord has ſent for ſome high Dame,
No cottage maid, like me."

"If thou Sir Oſwald's daughter art,
Lord Raymond ſent for thee;
A party of his archers brave,
Soon, Lady, thou ſhalt ſee."

Then loud he blew his bugle-horn,
The archers heard the ſound,
And inſtantly a warlike band
The trembling maid ſurround.

They placed her on a milk-white ſteed
And walk'd on either ſide;
The little page the bridle held
The milk-white ſteed to guide.

'Far in the windings of a wood
Rude battlements appear:
The page he blows his bugle-horn,
And Bertha ſhrinks with fear!

Harſh ſound the chains, and o'er the moat,
The heavy draw-bridge falls,
And now is Bertha cloſed within
The caſtle's gloomy walls.

Silent and ſad, ſhe let the page
Take her cold trembling hand,
And lead her up the ſtately ſtairs,
And thro' apartments grand.

'Till ent'ring where Lord Raymond ſat,
The boy, on bended knee,
Said: "Lady Bertha I preſent,
Moſt gracious Lord, to thee."

" Sir Oſwald's daughter, thou art mine;
Thy beauty be thy dower;
Fair Lady, thou my only ſon
Shalt wed within this hour."

" Thy ſon my Lord!—it cannot be;
I know not Raymond's heir,
And he will think a cottage maid
Is far beneath his care."

" Yet, tell me, fair one, tell me true,
If thou haſt never ſeen
A blooming youth of gracious ſpeech
And noble air and mien?"

" Ah! yes, I have—but he, my Lord,
Was a poor orphan youth,
Of lowly birth—he's abſent now—
To thee I tell the truth."

" Thou

"Thou doſt, and Edwy is his name,
A vaſſal in my train;
Such humble conqueſts Bertha now
With ſcorn thou muſt diſdain."

"And why, Lord Raymond, muſt I ſcorn
The humble Edwy now?
And why doſt thou ſo proudly look?
Why frowns thy low'ring brow?

"Though thy ſon, beauteous as the morn,
Poſſeſſes ev'ry grace,
As graceful is my Edwy's form,
As beauteous in his face."

"But Raymond's heir is titled, rich,
And lives in ſplendid ſtate."
"Then let him leave the cottage maid
To ſhare her Edwy's fate."

"To dwell, a noble Lady, here,
With wealth and ſplendor bleſt,
A youthful hero's blooming bride,
By him and me careſt;

"Or in a dungeon dark and deep,
On bread and water fed,
With Edwy hadſt thou rather ſtay
And ſhare his wretched bed?"

"His ſcanty food, his dungeon deep,
With Edwy will I ſhare,
Rather than dwell in royal ſtate
With thoſe who placed him there.

"No eaſe on *down* the cruel find,
Nor bliſs the perjured know,
While peaceful ſleeps on rugged ſtones
The *guiltleſs* child of woe."

"Thy

"Thy valiant father well I knew;
And can I let thee dwell,
Fair Bertha, with a vaſſal rude,
Confin'd in dreary cell?"

"Pauſe not, Lord Raymond; now reſolve
To ſet poor Edwy free;
Nor let him end in dungeon ſad
The life preſerved by me.

"So mayſt thou for thine only ſon
A peerleſs maid obtain,
Whoſe poliſh'd manners, noble birth,
Will grace a courtly train."

"Come forth; come forth, my gallant boy,
And let thy father ſee,
If Oſwald's daughter will prefer
A captive ſlave to thee."

And now the warlike youth appear'd,
Whoſe love fair Bertha ſcorn'd;
Stately he ſtept, and ſnow-white plumes
His glitt'ring helm adorn'd.

A 'broider'd ſcarf, with careleſs grace,
O'er his left ſhoulder hung,
In which, before the wound was heal'd
Poor Edwy's arm was ſlung.

"Well mayſt thou, Bertha, look ſurpris'd,
This ſcarf a vaſſal wore,
Once it was *thine*—'tis Raymond's now
For Edwy is no more."

"Yet, ſure, 'tis Edwy's voice I hear,
'Tis Edwy's face I ſee;
Nor can this martial garb conceal
The well-known youth from me.

"Ah!

" Ah! not well known—thy artful tongue
Is ſkill'd in courtly guiſe!
Ungen'rous Lord! why let thy men
A lonely maid ſurpriſe?

" Why was I brought a pris'ner here,
And why, by treach'rous wile,
Didſt thou my unſuſpecting heart
Of all its thoughts beguile?

" The love ſincere, ſo late my boaſt,
Like Edwy, is *no more:*
Let me depart and in my bower
His loſs a while deplore!"

" No, Bertha—give to Raymond's heir
The heart poor Edwy won;
Left in his humble garb again
I loſe my gallant ſon."

" Dear Bertha, long before the day
I ſlew the ſavage boar,
Oft did I ſee thee, lovely maid,
And ſilently adore.

" Yet, ever duteous to my ſire,
I ne'er my love reveal'd,
And in a huntſman's habit clad
My noble birth conceal'd:

" To that concealment 'tis I owe
The love and tender care,
Thou would'ſt my fair one have denied
To Baron Raymond's heir.

" My father heard my artleſs tale
Nor blamed his happy ſon;
Yet wiſh'd to prove if Bertha's love
Was for myſelf alone."

" And

"And happy has the trial been,
My daughter, dear to me;
And well thy matchleſs truth deſerves
The ſon I owe to thee.

"Oft to thy cot and myrtle bower
Together we'll repair,
And bleſs the day when Bertha found
Poor wounded Edwy there."

Elinor felt herſelf ſo intereſted for Bertha, while ſhe was reading this ſimple tale, that ſhe forgot the cold, and dreaded leſt a ſummons to breakfaſt ſhould prevent her from finiſhing it. When ſhe went down, ſhe read it to Sir Gervas, who heard it with great attention and ſaid, when it was finiſhed:

My Lydia has read that to me; I remember it well. She had an excellent taſte—ſo had my mother. You will find many pretty things in her deſk, that Lydia admired—ſhe loved reading.—Alas! Alas! I ſoon loſt her; and my days have been very ſad and gloomy ever ſince; now, may be, they will be more chearful. Let me ſee you merry and happy, my dear child—do not be dull, becauſe you are with an old uncle: I ſhall love to hear you ſing and ſee you dance about the Priory. Do, my Elinor, try to recover your ſpirits and enliven me with your ſmiles—it is natural for a young girl like you to be playful and lively. Ah! Phil Hawthorn, what haſt got there, my lad?"

"I ha' got a letter for your honor's worſhip's niece, Miſs Clifford. I did call at the mail office, cauſe ſo be as how Roſe bid me; and, ſure enough, there

there I found one for her honour, and I do be ſo bold as to hope that there do be ſome good news from poor Val in it, that is to ſay from Val's good maſter Sir Clement Darnley, begging her honor's pardon for being ſo bold as to ax."

"I do not expect a letter from Sir Clement yet," replied Elinor, with a ſigh and a bluſh. "This, Sir, is from Dr. R., incloſing one from my aunt, who, by the ſeal, had not heard of my father's death, when ſhe writ it. Shall I read them to you, my dear ſir?"

"No my child, no—not now,—I will take a walk with Phil, to examine my kitchen garden. I want to ſee how it comes on; for, there is no living without good vegetables—we muſt not neglect them. Come, Phil; give me your arm, my boy. Come to us in the garden, Elinor; the air will be good

for you, now the miſt is diſperſed. Come, when you have read your letters, and be ſure you do not cry over them too much, becauſe you know my love that tears will not recal the dead or make things one bit better—ſtay, ſtay—not too faſt, my good Philip."

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE CONTRAST.

WHEN SIR GERVAS was gone into the garden, Elinor took the letters up ſtairs, glad of having the liberty of reading them by herſelf. Dr. R's was full of kind wiſhes for her happineſs, and a promiſe to viſit her very ſoon, which promiſe gave her great pleaſure. Lady Stanmore's was as follows:

Dear Elinor,

After a very ſhort voyage, we arrived at Dublin in full health and ſpirits. We were moſt politely received by Lord Dromlarney, who is a cheerful entertaining man and lives in the higheſt ſtyle; conſequently, I ſhall find his houſe an agreeable temporary reſidence. Gayton and I have been every-where, and, I aſſure you, have great reaſon to be ſatisfied with ourſelves. He is admired by the ladies who are in general gay and beautiful; and *I*, having no young blooming niece at my elbow, attract as much notice as is neceſſary to give me faſhion among the men, who are gallant nd handi ome. I did not expect to find every thing ſo ſuited to my taſte, a court ſo elegant, entertain-

tainments ſo diverſified and aſſemblies ſo crowded: I ſuppoſe this will find you enjoying the nuptial fete at Melvin Park. I ſhall write a few lines to Lady Dromlarney, but thoſe I ſhall incloſe to the Duke and ſend this to Portman-ſquare.

Tell my dear brother I *will* love him, though he is angry with me, and that Colonel Gayton and myſelf join in the moſt affectionate wiſhes, that all diſpleaſure at our ſecret marriage may be baniſhed from his heart, which, I know, is not an implacable one. We join alſo in love to you, my dear Elinor, and wiſh you every bliſs that rural feſtivity, the preſence of an amiable lover, and the attention of numerous friends can give. Remember us to Sir Clement, Lord Felgrove, &c. &c. and believe me ever your affectionate aunt,

H. STANMORE.

" Ah!

"Ah! my dear aunt," ſaid the weeping Elinor, "how has the gaiety of your heart been checked, ſince you writ this letter! how do you now grieve for the beloved brother, whom you thoughtleſsly offended! never will the tender kiſs of fraternal reconciliation preſs your lips—*never*—yet, ſoon, very ſoon will the careſſes of your admired Gayton ſoothe your ſorrow, and diſſipation obliterate my poor father's untimely fate from your mind. Now, my dear aunt, you know the dreadful change in the fate of your Elinor. Melvin Park—rural feſtivity—numerous attentive friends—lover—father—every promiſed pleaſure—every bleſſing I ſo lately enjoyed are loſt—*all loſt* to me. The nuptial fete at Melvin Park changed to a funeral at Clifford Priory—attentive friends to cruel enemies—Sir Clement Darnley—for—Sir Gervas Clifford—my tender

tender father—to a pallid corpſe—no, *no*—to a guardian angel, I hope, who is now bleſſing his Elinor—who will obey his precepts and not diſgrace herſelf by unavailing and exceſſive grief—yet, *feel* I muſt—theſe are the tears of ſenſibility that flow from a heart, which will bear its load of ſorrow without murmuring—but—it cannot— Oh! it cannot without *feeling* them. Sure, it is not in the power of human nature to reconcile itſelf, in ſo ſhort a time, to ſuch a dreadful contraſt! No; philoſophy is the virtue of age and experience. Various viciſſitudes may be ſeen in many years—*I* have not yet numbered *nineteen*, and in this *laſt* ſad month, what have I not endured! The pangs of jealouſy—the ſtings of calumny—the pain of parting with an aunt very dear to me—with the man I love—perhaps, for years. Have I not been treated with cold indifference by falſe friends—mortified

tified by diſtreſſed and rapacious creditors, and plundered by robbers? Has not my honour been wounded by the propoſals of a villain, and my father murdered by his cruel hand? Yet, I am not *mad!* Tears, tears! you have preſerved me from diſtraction. I will not check you—when no one hears me, ſurely I may weep — when no one hears me, may I not complain? Pale ſhadows of my buried anceſtors, my grief will not diſturb *you*. Here I can relieve my ſwelling heart without diſtreſſing ſtrangers—for, no ſympathizing friend has the hapleſs Elinor, to ſoothe and pity her."

In vain did Elinor endeavour to ſuppreſs the affliction that Lady Stanmore's letter had awakened in her boſom—every time ſhe dried her eyes, ſome intruding melancholy reflection filled them again

again with tears. It was impoſſible for her to meet her uncle in the garden, according to his requeſt. Jenkins came to inform her dinner was almoſt ready. She anſwered him through the door that ſhe would go down immediately. She waſhed her aching eyes with cold water; ſhe ſtrove to appear cheerful; but, when ſhe attempted to apologize to Sir Gervas for not meeting him, ſobs interrupted her ſpeech—ſhe took his hand, and preſſed it to her lips in ſilent anguiſh, and, as dinner was not upon table, laid her aunt's letter on his lap and went into the garden to recover herſelf, while he read it.

Roger ſoon fetched her to dinner, and ſhe found Sir Gervas carving a nice roaſted chicken, which, accompanied with egg-ſauce and a ſallad, tempted Elinor to obey the earneſt entreaties

treaties of her uncle that ſhe would eat a good dinner—apple fritters made up the repaſt. When the ſervant quitted the room, Sir Gervas ſaid:

"What a fooliſh woman this Lady Stanmore is! ſhe is galloping away at a fine rate down the road to deſtruction, I ſee that, ſhe and and her young rakiſh huſband. Well, well, thank heaven! they cannot carry you along with them. You are ſafe out of harm's way, my poor girl. Better be in old Clifford Priory, than at this park or t'other park, with their fetes and their fooleries. Who is the lover that ſhe mentions? Is it the Sir Clement Darnley, who, your father writ me word, is to marry you in two years?"

"Yes,

"Yes, ſir—he is now at Montpelier with a ſick uncle."

"Good young man! heaven will reward him for it. He is doing his duty, and that will give him more ſatisfaction than ſkipping about, like a harlequin or a punchinello, in Melvin Park—I ſhall be very glad to ſee this good young man—and ſo will you, I ſuppoſe, my dear girl. Well, well! it is very natural. But do not leave me to go flaunting to town—you ſee what town does for every body. If you love one another, the Priory will be a paradiſe to you, and you will make it, almoſt a paradiſe to me—not quite—no, no; not quite; it can never be ſo again to your poor uncle. It was once—but my Lydia died. Alas! alas! I have never been happy ſince.

ſince. Well, well—read the old tale to me again—read me to ſleep, do, that's a good child."

Elinor obeyed, and, when Sir Gervas was aſleep, ſhe went into the garden, and ventured once again to enter the labyrinth in which ſhe had loſt herſelf. She now carefully obſerved her way. Its mazy windings led to the rocky mount: at the foot was a low entrance that ſeemed to lead to a cave. It was ſo guarded with the branches of evergreens which were planted on each ſide, that ſhe could ſcarcely make way through them; and, when ſhe did, the paſſage appeared ſo dark, that ſhe was almoſt afraid to enter it. But, on advancing ſome ſteps, rays of light glanced through ſmall aper-

apertures and diſcovered the beautiful decorations of the ſides and roof, which were compoſed of ſhells, coral, and glittering ſpars, intermixed with moſs and ſea-weeds; but Elinor's curioſity to ſee where this ornamented paſſage led to, would not allow her time to examine its various beauties.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE CELL.

A LITTLE door, formed of hazel-wands, neatly twiſted together, now ſtopped the progreſs of Elinor. It was ſunk deep into a frame of rock work, and over it, on a ſmall black ſtone, was legibly engraved the following inſcription, which a bright ſun-beam ſeemed to illuminate.

" Now, thou haſt traced the gloomy road
Which leads to this forlorn abode,
Canſt thou a tale of horror hear—
A *murderer's* tale!—and drop a tear?

And

And canſt thou, from a feeling heart,
The balm of ſympathy impart?
Then welcome here—but, if thy breaſt
Knows not to ſoothe a mind oppreſt,
Hence—enter not this lowly door,
Nor mis'ry's ſacred haunt explore."

Elinor's heart was appalled—ſhe withdrew her hand from the door, read the inſcription a ſecond time, and ſaid to herſelf.

"What ſhould I fear? have I a cold unfeeling heart? ſurely not—though I knew miſery was brought on by guilt, ſhould I not pity the diſtreſſed penitent, if there ſhould be an inhabitant of that deſcription in this cell? How very cowardly it will be to go back and aſk my uncle! If I have really any reaſon to fear entering a place in his garden, how fooliſh he would think me! and the domeſtics have ſo many ſimple fancies concerning

cerning ghoſts, that if I aſk them any queſtions, I ſhall not get a direct anſwer. They may communicate, in ſome meaſure, their timidity to me, and ſtagger my reſolution that prompts me to enter."

Elinor ſoftly puſhed open the door, and perceived a venerable old man, ſitting by a ſmall caſement. A book lay open before him, upon an old faſhioned oak table. Two fine boys appeared earneſtly attentive to what he was reading. Elinor ſtopt; but, finding that they did not move, ſhe concluded they were only figures and advanced towards them. When ſhe approached cloſe to the table, the old man lifted up his head and looking ſtedfaſtly at her, pointed to the book. The children alſo turned towards her. Elinor was ſo ſtartled at their ſudden and unexpected motion, that ſhe could not ſpeak; but

gazed

gazed on them with aſtoniſhment: for, notwithſtanding their movement, they did not look as if life had cauſed it. The light ſhone ſtrongly upon their faces, which had more the appearance of wax than fleſh and blood, and, as ſhe had ſeen figures that could be put into motion by ſtepping on a ſecret ſpring, a little reflection removed her fears, and ſhe examined them with attention—the man had a ſenſible penetrating countenance, and appeared above ſixty years of age. He was in the ſimple dreſs of a hermit. The children were apparently ten and twelve years old. As ſhe walked to the other ſide of the table, they regained their original poſture; but this ſecond movement did not ſurprize her, as ſhe imagined the ſprings that cauſed both were under the boards on which ſhe had trodden.

Wiſhing to know the contents of the book, Elinor took it up and opened a glaſs door that led to a ſmall garden, which was partly encloſed by lofty hedges. Through theſe, openings were cut in ſome places, to admit the proſpects. The rocky-mount aroſe on one ſide, from a cavity of which the river fell in an irregular and beautiful caſcade.

Elinor was charmed with the wild beauty of this delightful ſpot, which was already enamelled with various flowers. The trees and ſhrubs were burſting into leafy verdure, to ſhelter ſeveral little bowers agreeably ſituated. She ſat down in one, near the water-fall, and, as the ſun-beams darted full upon it, ſhe beheld it glittering like gems, through the ſlightly covered net-work of her bower.

The book was a fair manuſcript and contained the following conciſe hiſtory.

"In me, behold the reſemblance of the unfortunate Charles Clifford, who ſpent thirty years of miſery in this ſolitude. He was the youngeſt ſon of Sir Rowland Clifford, and a colonel in the royal army in the year 1715. His fatal bravery againſt the rebels of that period aſſiſted the cauſe of his ſovereign and deſtroyed his own peace for ever. He was called from the embraces of a beloved wife, to join his regiment at Portſmouth, when her ſituation rendered it unſafe for her to travel. He accordingly left his lovely Emma in her father's caſtle, on the borders of Scotland, where ſhe inceſſantly lamented the abſence of her adored Clifford, who, to his great joy, was ſoon ordered with his regiment, to aſſiſt in quelling the rebels, in the very city where his Emma

dwelt, and had arrived within half a mile of it, when he was met by a party of the rebel army, who reſolutely oppoſed his paſſage. It was too dark for him to diſtinguiſh who the commanders were; but, as he knew them to be enemies to his king and country, he inſpired his brave ſoldiers to fight with courage, and force their way through their oppoſers, which they ſoon did with very little loſs on the ſide of the royaliſts, who, marching over heaps of ſlain, entered the town in triumph.

"Clifford, exulting in the glorious conqueſt, lodged his harraſſed warriors for the night and proceeded immediately to the caſtle, which he now thought a dangerous ſituation for his Emma, whom he determined to remove to Clifford Priory, where ſhe would be ſafe from the alarms and dangers of war, at leaſt for a time. As he approached the walls,

walls, he was not ſurpriſed at ſeeing the caſtle fortified. He walked round to a back gate, and, though he did not know the watch-word, when he ſaid he was a ſon-in-law of their Lord, who had been abſent for ſome time, the guard let him paſs; for, as he was enveloped in his great coat, they could not ſee his regimentals. Lady Emma's attendants were rejoiced to ſee him, and cautiouſly introduced him to his faithful and moſt beloved wife, who, ruſhing precipitately into his arms, eagerly entreated him to fly from a place, where he was ſurrounded by foes, and offered to be the companion of his flight. Then, deſiring him to aſk no queſtions, ſhe haſtily diſguiſed herſelf like a menial ſervant and told him they muſt eſcape out of a private and unfrequented door in the garden, of which ſhe gave him the key.

"Juſt as the agitated Emma had changed her dreſs, they were alarmed by the awful ſound of a dead march and a deep murmur of diſtreſs. Emma was ready to faint with terror—yet love and the preſence of her Clifford gave her courage, and, hoping to paſs unnoticed by a ſecret way, ſhe haſtened down ſtairs, Clifford ſoftly and ſilently following her: but, before they gained the hall-door, they heard many feet approaching, and concealed themſelves behind it. Some of the ſervants entered firſt, lighting a party of Highlanders, who bore the mangled bodies of the Lord of the caſtle and his two brave ſons. The fatigued ſoldiers ſtopped to reſt; the ſervants held up their torches to behold their dear maſters—and Emma diſcovered, by the fatal light, the breathleſs forms of her father and two brothers. Dreadful was the ſight ſhe ſaw, but ſtill more dreadful were the words

ſhe

ſhe heard—ſhe heard thoſe who bore them ſay, that—*Clifford*, whoſe paſſage they had oppoſed, had ſlain them *all*. The hand that murdered them, at that moment, was fondly claſped in hers. She let it go with a ſhriek of horror, and fell ſenſeleſs to the ground, while Clifford, petrified by the terrific words, ſtood for ſome time immoveable. The Highlanders paſſed to an inner apartment with their ſad burthens. Then, without attempting to recal the wretched Emma to a ſenſe of her miſery, Clifford paſſed unmoleſted, with her in his arms, through the door of which he had the key, and carried her to a houſe where part of his regiment was quartered. The pangs of a premature labor reſtored her to life and ſenſe. In an agony of mind and body, not to be deſcribed, ſhe was delivered of a male child, who died in a few minutes after he was born, and Emma expired the

ſame day. Clifford was left to contemplate the ruin he had cauſed, till a temporary frenzy ſeized his brain. Unable to perform his martial duty, he was brought to Clifford Priory, where, after ſome time, he recovered his ſenſes, and with them a ſenſe of his misfortunes which were too ſevere—too heart-rending, to admit of conſolation. *Here*, a voluntary recluſe, he hid himſelf from the world, for many melancholy years. The childiſh prattle of his two nephews, Gervas and Charles, ſeemed to give ſome relief to his agonized mind, and he devoted all his time to their inſtruction and amuſement. They are here repreſented, ſuch as they were at his death, which they alone, whoſe youthful hearts were not ſenſible of the feelings of his, could lament. The inſcription over the door was written by himſelf, as was alſo his melancholy life, from which this extract was taken.

The

The wax figures were made at his requeſt, to be a laſting memorial of his regard for his two nephews—and—as his beloved wife, the Lady Emma Clifford and her child, were buried, with her unfortunate father and brothers, in their family vault, it was the particular deſire of Colonel Clifford to be interred where he had been for ſo many years ſequeſtered from the world. A ſpot of earth was therefore conſecrated in this hermitage, and his remains depoſited under a black marble ſlab, in the centre of it."

How did this unadorned narrative of melancholy facts affect the gentle ſympathizing heart of Elinor! She aroſe with a pious awe, to replace the manuſcript. Sacred now was the abode of the unfortunate Clifford. Affection and pity filled her breaſt, as ſhe re-entered the hermitage. She ſaw the large

ſlab of black marble in the middle of the floor. Her tears dropped faſt upon it, as ſhe ſtooped to read the inſcription —ſhe then went to the table to replace the book. Juſt as ſhe laid it down, the figure raiſed itſelf, as before, and pointed to the book. The motion—the melancholy expreſſion of the face now ſeemed to freeze her ſoul. Fancy almoſt overpowered her reaſon—ſhe thought ſhe beheld the real Charles Clifford, and it was with difficulty that ſhe recovered her recollection. She then looked with tenderneſs on the little repreſentatives of her grand-father and Sir Gervas, in their early years, and bleſt them for being comforting angels to their afflicted uncle—his languid eyes—his pale face were ſtill turned towards her. She thought he reſembled her father, and ſhe exclaimed aloud:

"Dear

"Dear uncle! Poor Charles Clifford! though you are not ſenſible of my kindneſs, yet—I will viſit you."

A diſtant and hollow voice repeated,

"I will viſit you."

Elinor ſtarted from the table, and the figure of Colonel Clifford, in regaining its firſt attitude, appeared more like life than before. As the wind, from the garden door which ſhe had left open, waved his venerable grey hair at the ſame minute. Elinor, ſupporting herſelf againſt the moſs-covered wall, cried in a terrified accent.

"My God is it poſſible—can it be! are you alive?"

The ſame awful voice anſwered:

 "Alive."

" Alive."

Elinor, after a long pauſe, ſaid:

" This voice may be an echo. I will not let vain fears overcome me—I am determined to find it out."

The voice diſtinctly ſaid:

" Find it out."

She pauſed again for ſome time, till the alarming voice called:

" Elinor."

Now, convinced that it was no *echo*, ſhe loſt all her fortitude. Her eyes grew dim; the figures appeared in motion to her unſteady ſight, and ſhe was apprehenſive of loſing her ſenſes entirely, when " Elinor" ſounded in her ears, and

and a gigantic ſhadow glanced along the wall. Though faint and giddy, ſhe turned to obſerve its progreſs—and, beheld a diſmal appearance, wrapt in funeral weeds, ſtanding upon the black marble. She heard it call:

"Elinor! Elinor!"

But Elinor could not anſwer—ſhe ſunk motionleſs on the ground. It was ſome time before ſhe recovered her ſenſes, and, when ſhe did, ſhe perceived with horror the frightful apparition ſitting by her ſide. She heard it ſay, in the ſolemn accents of deſpair:

"Oh! Elinor! Elinor!"

She cloſed her eyes—ſhe wiſhed to loſe herſelf once more in inſenſibility, rather than awaken to be tormented by ſupernatural or ideal phantoms—ſhe felt a cold bony hand graſp hers—a death-

like

like chill crept along her veins, while ſhe heard the terrific voice ſay :

" Do not be afraid, Elinor—I am your *uncle*—look upon me—ſpeak to me."

Without daring to look at the ſpectre, the trembling Elinor languidly replied:

" If you are the ſpirit of the unfortunate Colonel Clifford, have you not ſeen me weep over your ſad narrative? What can I do more for you, my dear unfortunate uncle? but—hope that you are *now* rewarded in heaven, for all your ſufferings *here*."

A heart-rending groan reſounded through the cell—and Elinor ſhrunk from the gripe of the ſpectre, whoſe arms cloſed around her, as it ſaid :

" Elinor,

"Elinor, you muſt ſtay *here* no longer —come with me."

"Have you ſeen my father? why was not he ſent to fetch me? Oh! take me to him——plunge with me at once into the tomb."

"O my ſweet Elinor! thy wits are gone! why didſt thou come into this ſad place alone, my dear child? why didſt thou come alone?"

Elinor ventured to look-up—and—found herſelf in the arms of her living uncle and not in thoſe of a ſpectre. Yet his dreſs was ſo very ſtrange, that ſhe could ſcarcely believe her eyes. He had on a long black cloak, like thoſe worn at funerals, a very large hat half ſlouched, with a crape hat-band hanging down from the hind corners, which hat-band was added in reſpect to his nephew's

phew's death. The hat and Roquelaure was his garden-dreſs, when he found himſelf cold. Poor Sir Gervas was rejoiced to ſee Elinor coming a little to herſelf and continued:

"Heaven be praiſed, my dear love, that I have found you! Come, come, you will be well preſently—let us get out of this cell—I wiſh you had not come into it by yourſelf—I do not wonder the figures frightened you, ſeeing you did not know the trick of them—how doſt do my child? Can'ſt walk?"

"Yes, ſir, I hope ſo—I am better now. Indeed, my dear uncle, I am aſhamed of my folly—I will ſit down, if you pleaſe, juſt a few minutes."

"Do,

"Do, my dear, do, and ſo will I—my old knees are cramped with being ſo long on the ground, trying to recover you. So, you took me for the ghoſt of poor uncle Charles; how came that about, my Elinor?"

"Did you call me, before you came in, ſir?"

"Yes, my love. I had been looking all about the garden for you."

"Is there an echo here, my dear uncle?"

"Yes, a very ſtrong one—I found out by that where you were, and ſo, came to you directly."

Elinor, then, told Sir Gervas of her reading the manuſcript, and the effect

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"Yes, a very ſtrong one—I found out by that where you were, and ſo, came to you directly."

Elinor, then, told Sir Gervas of her reading the manuſcript, and the effect

feſt the echo had on her low ſpirits; and, though ſhe found that her terrors were cauſed by the moſt trifling and natural circumſtances, yet ſhe was heartily glad to quit the cell.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE UNEXPECTED MUSICIAN.

WHEN they came into the Priory, Rachel was alarmed at the pallid looks of Elinor, and ſaid in a great fright:

"Lord love you! what do be the matter with you, my dear young Lady? How ſick and pale you do look."

"My niece went into the cell by herſelf, and was frightened at the wax figures—that is all, Rachel. She is better now, thanks be to Heaven! than when

when I found her there: alas a day! ſhe was very bad, indeed, when I found her."

"Poor thing! no wonder! I am ſure it do be a ſhame to let ſuch things as they be ſtay in the place, to fright Chriſtians out on their wits; and the ugly things muſt jump up and down—and the echo muſt mock one—Lord ha mercy, if I do unt hate even to look upon the very rock itſelf! I could unt go into the cell, if ſo be your worſhip oud give me all that you do be worth in the county. Yet lack-a-day! it do be bad enough to ſtay in here—what with one thing and another—I am ſure, I do never paſs the ——"

"Hold your tongue, Rachel, hold your tongue—not a word more, as you value my commands—ſure I may have what I pleaſe in my garden and in my houſe.

houſe. What right have you to find fault? I do not keep wild beaſts, to tear people to pieces: wax figures cannot hurt any body; no more can dead people, nor armour fixed upon a bit of wood, though it does look like a man with a ſword in his hand; it cannot kill you: yet I am always to be plagued with your ſilly fears and frights at nothing at all. You can't go here—nor you can't go there. I wonder you do not run away, ſcreaming, from your own ſhadow, when you ſee it. My niece is a poor low ſpirited young thing, juſt come from a very gay place, and ſhe may be frightened a little, at firſt, ſeeing ſhe does not know the nature of old priories, and chapels, and cells; but you, who have lived among them all your days, what have you to be afraid of, you old foolatum?"

"Lawk-

"Lawk-a-daiſy! your worſhip! I ca unt help it for the life o'me, thof to be ſure nothing do ha ever hurted me yet, that do be the truth on it, yet I do be very feared o'ſome ut here—and ſome ut there—but I ont ſay a word more, your worſhip about—about any thing—no, indeed, and upon my troth."

"Well! well! ſee that you don't. Go and roaſt ſome potatoes for ſupper—and ſay no more.—Elinor, I will give you the book from which the extract you have read was taken—but, firſt, I will ſhow you Colonel Charles Clifford, when he was a young man—his picture is in your chamber—we will go up and look at it."

Elinor conducted her uncle up ſtairs, and, when he entered the room, and was ſeated, he ſaid:

"There

"There is poor uncle Charles—brave, unfortunate man! Well do I remember his affectionate behaviour to your grandfather and me; and the pleaſure we had in ſtaying with him—Ah! what tears we ſhed over him, as he lay ſick upon his little bed! and—alas a-day! when he died, we wandered about, as diſtreſſed as if we had loſt the whole world. I ſhall never forget it—often and often have we gone into the cell, and wiſhed to find his ſpirit there, inſtead of the wax image, and, I am ſure, ſuch was our love for him, that we ſhould have ran to it with joy. We planted the moſt beautiful flowers and flowering ſhrubs in his little garden, and kept it in as much order, as if he were to walk in it. There we read and ſtudied—but *there* we never *played*—too dear to us was the memory of our kind uncle, and too ſerious our grief for his death,

to

to let us be gay either in his cell or his garden."

The picture was a full length of a very handſome man in regimentals, and greatly reſembled both the father and grandfather of Elinor, who had often contemplated it with a melancholy pleaſure, ſince her abode at the Priory, and the diſtreſſing hiſtory of the original rendered the portrait, now, ſtill more intereſting. While ſhe was looking at it, Sir Gervas exclaimed:

"Oh! this chamber, and that cloſet, Elinor, recals to the mind of your poor uncle thoſe far dearer to him than Charles Clifford. Yes, my heavenly Lydia, you were my *life*—I have been dead to every comfort, ſince I loſt you. Awhile, you glided about theſe diſmal apartments like a gay viſion. Here, you have

have enchanted me with your melodious voice, while your delicate fingers have lightly touched the keys of that harpſichord, or ſwept over the ſtrings of your guittar. Elinor, can you play, can you ſing?"

"Yes, ſir: but I fear it will give you pain to hear me—you will think of Lady Clifford and be ſad."

"It will be a pleaſing ſadneſs, my child. I have often wiſhed to hear the ſongs with which ſhe uſed to charm me—this was my mother's apartment—kneeling by that bed, I received her laſt bleſſing."

"Then Lady Clifford died in this room, ſir?" ſaid Elinor, looking with ſome degree of horror on the bed.

"Yes, child: but I have ſlept in the bed ſince—you have no reaſon to be afraid. My mother would have loved you, had you lived in her days. I am ſure ſhe will not hurt you now, nor frighten you; ſo, do not be afraid."

Elinor bluſhing, aſſured Sir Gervas that ſhe was not in the leaſt afraid. He ſaid:

"It would be a great folly if you were. When I married, I had a chamber ſplendidly fitted up for my adored wife, and this of my revered mother's I choſe ſhould remain as ſhe left it; and I made it my own room, when Lady Clifford lay-in, becauſe it was near hers. When ſhe died—I had that adjoining to my ſtudy fitted up for me, where I have ſlept ever ſince. The back ſtairs lead from it to my Lydia's chamber which I viſit every day."

"I do

"I do not wonder that you are ſo melancholy, ſir, when you take ſuch pains to keep up the remembrance of her. You might as well have ſlept in that chamber."

"There is not *room* for me."

"Not *room*, my dear ſir!"

"No more, Elinor, no more—I have talked too much—do you not think the evening is grown very gloomy?"

"It is almoſt duſk, ſir, what is that! hark! hark! ſomebody is ſighing in the cloſet."

"It is only the wind, child, whiſtling through the caſement—Ah! how now? who is playing upon the harpſichord?"

"Yes, child: but I have ſlept in the bed ſince—you have no reaſon to be afraid. My mother would have loved you, had you lived in her days. I am ſure ſhe will not hurt you now, nor frighten you; ſo, do not be afraid."

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Elinor flew from her ſeat and laid faſt hold of her uncle's arm, and exclaimed:

"Good God! who can it be!"

"Let us ſee—let us ſee, do not tremble ſo, my Elinor? Why are you ſo fearful? what do you think can hurt you?"

Again a light hand ſeemed to play over the keys from the higheſt to the loweſt, as if to try if they were in tune. Sir Gervas, holding his trembling niece by the arm, entered the cloſet—he ſaid:

"The window and the harpſichord are both open, but the muſician is not viſible: let us look about."

"Huſh,

"Huſh, my dear ſir—I hear a ſighing ſtill—pray liſten."

"I hear it alſo!—look, Elinor, on the top of the book-caſe and you will ſee who the ſighing muſician is."

Elinor looked and beheld a pigeon ſitting there, who again flying down on the harpſichord, ran along the keys and ſounded them as before—then, perching on the caſement, looked about for ſome time, ere he could recollect his way home; for, he had ſtrayed from the farm. Sir Gervas ſaid:

"There he goes, a little wanderer! now, if Rachel and Roger Jenkins had been here, they would have gone down ſtairs, head foremoſt, and have ſworn that the cloſet was haunted. It is a pity people have not reſolution to ſearch into the cauſe of their fears. I fancy

even *you*, Elinor, would not have taken courage to have gone into the cloſet, if you had been here by yourſelf."

"Indeed, my dear ſir, I have given you great cauſe to ſuſpect my fortitude to-day: but melancholy events and melancholy converſation certainly debilitates the mind."

"Very true, my dear child, very true! and then you are ſo young, you are not inured to diſmal things. I am not ſurpriſed. Shut the window, or the bats will fly in and frighten you: but be ſure, my love, to look about always, when you hear any ſtrange noiſes and do not ſit trembling and terrifying yourſelf to death for nothing. Remember—that your frights of to-day were occaſioned only by a wax image—an echo—your uncle in a black cloak—and a poor little pigeon."

Elinor

Elinor was quite aſhamed. She thought herſelf now more ridiculous than ever Roſe had been, beeauſe her education and the company ſhe had kept ought to have rendered her above ſuch weak fancies. Sir Gervas ſaw her look abaſhed and ſaid:

"You have received good leſſons, my dear girl, and will profit by them, I hope, and not join with the ignorant, in ſuppoſing that all old caſtles and priories are haunted. Believe me, there are more evil ſpirits wandering about at midnight in your gay faſhionable houſes in town, than ever appeared in old country manſions, ſince the world began. Well, well! things muſt go on as they will—we cannot make them better: but then we need not make them worſe. No, no—we have troubles

enough, without adding nonſenſical fears to them: for, even ſuppoſing the ſpirits of departed people do walk about occaſionally, they are very harmleſs: they never rob the houſe or murder the inhabitants, and, if they have any complaints to make, or any thing to communicate, poor things! why ſhould we not hear them patiently. If they come to warn us againſt any danger, it is very friendly and we ought to attend to them with gratitude. *I* never was ſo happy as to ſee either my uncle Charles or my Lydia, though I have prayed earneſtly that they would return and bleſs me with a ſight of them, though but for a moment; but they never came. No, my adored Lydia, I have only beheld you in my dreams! — Come, come, we will go down——I ſee you do not like to talk

talk of ghoſts. Never mind; they will not come a bit the ſooner for it, my poor little fearful girl!"

"Indeed, ſir, I am not fearful—I was only ſurpriſed."

"Well, well! we will not diſpute on that point, but eat our ſupper and go to bed tranquilly—you muſt not read Colonel Clifford's life to-night, though I intend to give it to you. Lay it by, till morning and then, if it lowers your ſpirits, you can walk about and amuſe yourſelf. You muſt not read any thing diſmal at night, my child—Come, we will go down."

Elinor followed her uncle in ſilent vexation, to think that he had ſuch a childiſh opinion of her, when ſhe herſelf thought her fears, in ſome meaſure, excuſable.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE STORM.

WHILE they were at ſupper, the wind aroſe and howled very unpleaſantly. To Elinor the ſound was very awful. Sir Gervas did not mind it and ſtrove to make her cheerful, by giving her ſome comical accounts of Rachel's fears, occaſioned by various trifling incidents, at which Elinor was too polite not to appear entertained, and they ſat up later than uſual.

When ſhe retired to her apartment, ſhe took the manuſcript with her, and,

notwithſtandiug the injunctions of her uncle, was ſtrongly tempted to read it. As ſhe held it in her hand, conſidering whether ſhe ſhould read it or not, ſhe caſt her eyes towards the picture. The feeble lamp did not extend its beams ſo far; but a pale blue light diſcovered every feature—Elinor's heart was *not* proof againſt *fear*. The manuſcript fell from her hand—ſo would the lamp, if ſhe had not put it upon the table, before ſhe ſaw that luminous appearance, which vaniſhed inſtantly. She took up the book, and laid it in a drawer—then placed her lamp in the chimney, and began, though with trembling hands, to undreſs herſelf.

The wind ſwept in tremendous guſts around the Priory: the gothic caſements rattled and the cloſet door burſt open—the room was illuminated in every part—and diſtant thunder, rumbling in a long

but

but broken peal, relieved the terrified Elinor, who was now convinced that the light which, at firſt, ſo much alarmed her was nothing more than lightning. She regretted very much that ſhe had neither curtains nor ſhutters, to ſcreen her from it. She drew her bed curtains as cloſe as poſſible, but the rod was ſo ruſty, that the rings in ſome places would not ſlip over it. The ſtorm continued with ſuch encreaſing violence, that it was impoſſible for her to ſleep. Once, when, in a ſhort interval, ſhe doſed for a few minutes, the adventures of the cell were repeated by her troubled fancy with terrific additions, and ſhe ſtarted up at the echo's alarming expreſſion of, "I will viſit you." How did ſhe wiſh for ſomebody to ſpeak to, yet ſhe was determined not to call up Rachel. The lightning was now without intermiſſion—one flaſh more violent than the reſt, ſhivered her lamp into a thouſand

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ſand pieces, and, during the dreadful moment of total darkneſs, ſhe heard a ſtrange ruſtling in the room and ſomebody drawing the chairs. She caught the bell-rope—it fell from the wire, and immediately a quick ſucceſſion of vivid flaſhes ſhone on Colonel Clifford who ſtood before her. Conſcious that ſhe was perfectly awake, ſhe gazed in awful ſilence on the apparition, till darkneſs again enveloped the apartment, while the thunder ſeemed to rend the roof of the Priory and ſhake its walls to the foundation—till again more than the luſtre of noon-day glared on Clifford.

"By that Almighty Power who has given you permiſſion to viſit this world, I conjure you to ſpeak to me—now—while I retain my ſenſes, and can attend to what you ſay! Speak, ſacred ſhade!"

Elinor

Elinor pauſed—the ſilence was only broke by the warring elements. Yet ſtill the phantom ſtood before her, and the terrible "I will viſit you" was now fulfilled. Again Elinor attempted to ſpeak; but darkneſs veiled it from her eyes. She lay down, and, covering her face, ſtrove to forget the ſpectre. She thought of Darnley, of her aunt, ſhe wiſhed herſelf at Montpelier—at Ireland —and any where but at Clifford Priory. Then, not daring to look up, ſhe earneſtly prayed that heaven would give her fortitude, to ſtay in a place that ſhe was now convinced ſupernatural beings viſited.

The night appeared longer than three —her lips were parched, but ſhe could not take courage to get up for water. The ſolemn intervals of ſilence were long as the ſtorm abated, and were more tremendous to Elinor than the thunder,

thunder, as in thoſe pauſes ſhe dreaded to hear the ſtill more awful voice of Colonel Clifford. Thus appalled by the moſt alarming ideas, did ſhe paſs the ſlowly creeping night. At length, ſhe heard the clock ſtrike ſix, and, knowing that it muſt be full day-light, ſhe ventured to uncover her face: but the phantom was *not* vaniſhed, and ſhe hid herſelf again under the clothes, more affrighted than ever, till Rachel knocked at the door and called her. Once more, ſhe ventured to look up—and, ſtill the form of Colonel Clifford ſtood before her eyes, dreſſed exactly like his picture under which he ſtood—the voice of Rachel animated Elinor with a little courage—ſhe ſaid:

"Rachel, I am not up yet—ſpeak to me—tell me how you ſlept."

As ſhe ſpoke, ſhe ſtooped forward, that Rachel might hear her, and perceived that the object of her terror was the *picture* of Colonel Clifford, ſtanding upright behind a dreſſing ſtool. Nothing can equal the joy Elinor felt at this diſcovery, which at once relieved her agitated mind from the agonizing horrors of the night, aud ſhe thought *fear* ſhould never uſurp dominion over it again. Rachel, who had not heard her ſpeak, knocked once more. Elinor let her in, and, upon examining the picture, found that the ring was broken, or melted by the lightning, and the picture ſlipping down between the ſtool and the wainſcot, occaſioned the noiſe that firſt alarmed Elinor; and, as the curtains and vallance of her bed concealed the frame, it was impoſſible by the unſteady flaſhes of lightning to diſcover that it was a portrait, eſpecially as Elinor's fears corroborated the deception. The bell-

bell-wire was melted and the floor ſtrewed with pieces of the ſhattered lamp. Rachel ſtood in amaze, while Elinor told her what a night of terror ſhe had experienced.

"Lack-a-daiſy! deary me! I do wonder you do be alive, dear lady, with his poor dear honor, Colonel Clifford, frighting you here, and frighting you there—like a wax man—and like a painted man—heaven help us! I do wiſh that all them fearful things had never a been'd made—only ſo be I loves his honor's good worſhip, Sir Gervas Clifford, and I be cuſtomed to the old Priory, ſeeing I was born'd in it as well as his honor, or I oud unt ſtay in it—and it do be juſt the ſame wi' Roger Jenkins. But, deary me! bleſs your heart, his honor do be waiting breakfaſt for you, ſweet lady—come—come down, now you do be

be ready, or his worſhip will be ſo unpatient."

Elinor did not tell Sir Gervas that ſhe took the picture of Colonel Clifford for his ſpirit, but confined the cauſe of her fears to the noiſe it had made in falling and the breaking of her lamp, at which Sir Gervas looking very much diſpleaſed, ſaid:

"That is a ſad thing indeed—a very ſad thing—bleſs me! bleſs me! that nice lamp broke to pieces! How careleſs you was to ſet it in the chimney—well! well! you muſt ſuffer for your folly and go to bed in the dark; for, I will not buy another—no, no child—nor will I have candles burnt in waſte—in a few days we can do without any artificial light."

"How

"How will that be poſſible, ſir?"

"We muſt go to bed in good time."

"What ſir! before it is dark?"

"To be ſure—to be ſure—you ſhall keep wholeſome hours now, child. The town rakes may do as they pleaſe—gamble away their fortunes and deſtroy their conſtitutions. We, in the country, Elinor, know better; we will live *well* and live *long:* mind my good old adage 'Go to bed with the lamb and get up with the lark.' It is good for me, who am an old man—and good for you too, child. Remember, you are not now the gay Miſs Clifford of Portman-ſquare, following an extravagant father and a giddy fooliſh aunt to ſcenes of diſſipation and folly. No, no; they have left you deſtitute to *my* care, and you are

now

now Elinor of Clifford Priory: therefore, I expect that you will conform to my rules with cheerfulneſs, and not attempt to introduce faſhionable hours and faſhionable expences here. No, no; they will not do for me. Though you have been initiated into the fooliſh vanities of life and corrupted by bad examples, you cannot infect me; my habits are fixt; you ſhall not alter them, neither by talking, nor by tears—ſimple contradictory tears, ſuch as you are ſhedding *now*, becauſe truly *you* do not like to go to bed before the ſun *riſes*, and *I* like to go before it *ſets*—come, come eat your breakfaſt—eat your breakfaſt and do not be a little ſimpleton, crying for nothing. I cannot pity you now; ſo you may as well dry your eyes, Elinor."

"Pardon me, ſir, if I am ſenſible of your anger, though I do not know how I have

I have incurred it. I did *not* object to early hours: no, ſir; the child of your bounty ſhall never preſume to contradict your will in any reſpect—I *feel* my obligations to you and can never be ungrateful."

"I hope not, I hope not—it ſhows a bad heart to be ungrateful. I have ſeen a great deal of ingratitude in my time, and I aſſure you it makes me very cautious how I do a kindneſs to people—they ſo ſeldom return it in the manner I wiſh or expect."

Jenkins came in, to take away the breakfaſt things and Elinor ſaid:

"I think, ſir, Mr. Jenkins had better get ſomebody to look at the pictures; perhaps they may all want new rings: for, if they have been worn out by time, ſome bad accident may happen

from ſuch heavy frames falling, as they may not always ſlip behind ſtools or chairs."

"What! what! new rings, child, for all thoſe pictures! where are we to get them?"

"Cannot they be bought, Sir, at ſome market town?"

"I will not buy any, I aſſure you. Let the pictures tumble, if they will, I will not lay out a halfpenny to prevent them."

"But it will be dangerous, ſir, for any body to go into the room and the bell-wire wants mending, that was broke laſt night."

"Then, ſo it ſhall remain—muſt I be at an expence for repairing bell-wires

wires and old pictures! not I indeed, child. Yet, ſtay—let me conſider—in regard to the pictures, as you ſay, it may be dangerous—if they ſhould any of them happen to fall down and break a head or an arm, why then, to be ſure, heads and arms *muſt* be mended and ſurgeon's work is dear—very dear—ſo do you hear, Roger, take down all the family pictures and ſet them upon their feet. Go and do it this inſtant, leſt they ſhould deſcend too ſuddenly, and be ſure that you ſet them ſafe, ſo that the furniture cannot ſcratch them."

"They do be vaſt heavy, your worſhip. I do unt believe that I do ha ſtrength enough to lift um down by my own ſelf, your honor."

"May be not, Roger—may be not—well! well! go over to Milbrook's, and get a man to help you—why, Elinor,

nor you will fancy you have a rout in Portman-ſquare, when you ſee ſo much company about you, looking as if they would walk to ſpeak to you; and if they are not dreſſed according to the modern faſhion, you may fancy yourſelf at a maſquerade, only free from the impertinence of it. When Roger has got the ſteps in the room, he may look at the bell-wire and mend it, if he can with a bit of ſtring: but I do not ſee any great neceſſity for mending it at all—I will not have poor old Rachel rung up for every trifle, by a young girl who is able to wait upon herſelf. I have not a ſcore of ſervants in my houſe to bring me to ruin. No, no—the bell ſhall remain as it is."

"I do not wiſh to make an improper uſe of it, ſir. I never have . . .," ſaid the gentle Elinor, her eyes again gliſtening with tears, to conceal which ſhe

haſtened out of the ſtudy, and, as the garden was wet, ſhe ſhut herſelf in her cloſet and endeavoured to loſe her own ſorrows in thoſe of Colonel Clifford whoſe hiſtory ſhe read. It was written in the moſt affecting manner, and began from his attachment to the lovely Emma, on whoſe beauty and accompliſhments he dwelt with a lover's prolixity. Yet Elinor did not think it tedious: ſhe knew the tragical end, and went through the preceding pages with the moſt ſacred attention.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

A NARRATION.

WHILE ELINOR was reading in her cloſet, Jenkins, with the aſſiſtance of a man from the farm, took down the pictures and very good naturedly mended the bell-wire, becauſe, he ſaid, it would pleaſe his dear maſter Charles' grand child, who ought to have every thing as it ſhould be, now ſhe was lady of the Priory—Elinor heard him, and ſighing deeply, ſaid to herſelf.

"Alas! no — I am a mortified dependant — a ſlave of the Priory! a ſlave to caprice. My uncle no longer loves me; he ſeems to think me an incumbrance. Oh! my father — my father! that I was lying with you at peace in the chapel. While I thought myſelf a comfort to my uncle, I was, in ſome degree, happy; but if *he* has taken a diſlike to me, who is there to grieve for me! Darnley, my affectionate Darnley! he would grieve. I know he would. Yes, deareſt of men, you love your Elinor, as poor Charles Clifford loved his Emma. I know your generous heart! my want of fortune—my accumulated ſorrows will endear me to you. You will wiſh the tedious period at an end, in which duty forbids you to protect me. How ſimilar are our ſituations! we are each appointed

"To

"To rock the cradle of declining age."

"Grateful taſk! if we can cheer and ſoothe our childleſs relatives in the vale of life. Glorious triumph of patience! if we can bend ſubmiſſively to the infirmities of their tempers and love them, though their capriciouſneſs wounds us to the heart.

Elinor was rouſed from her ſoliloquy by Jenkins who called out:

"Dear your Ladyſhip, do but come and look how frightful the room do be wi um all ſtanding about on the floor. I do declare, if um be unt enough to ſcare a body all in the dark night, that um be—for um do look juſt ſo be as if um oud all walk about, heaven preſerve us from um! but it do be vaſt frightful

to ſee um ſtand on their legs—be unt it your Ladyſhip?"

Elinor, recollecting her terror in the night, replied:

"It does look very ſtrange, indeed. I wiſh they were in another room, but I ſuppoſe my uncle will not let them be removed."

"No, no, dear Lady; his honor's worſhip do be main obſtinunt. He will ha every thing juſt where he do chuſe it. We do unt dare ſay nay to un. Lord love you! my old Lady Clifford did ſo pet and humour un, that a do be quite ſpoilt. And then, a married ſuch a beautiful creature, and ſhe too was always ſo mild and ſo loving to un, that ſhe cou'd unt ſee a fault a had—and he thought nothing too fine or too dear

for

for ſhe. Oh! bleſs you; he did be ſo extravagant—ſuch a wedding—ſuch a wedding—ſuch feaſting, and balls, and maſks, and fire-works, and illuminations, in the Priry and in the garden, it oud ha done your heart good to ha been'd here in them days."

"How long did the laſt Lady Clifford live, after ſhe was married?"

"Let me ſee—when my old lady died, my young lady had a been married about one year—but alack-a-day, my old Lady grow'd ſick and bad, yet nobody did believe ſhe beed ſo near her laſt minute. And my poor young lady was ſitting by her ſide, as ſhe did lie in this very room—yes—and in that very ſame bed—there did ſhe lay dozing as it were—and there did ſit her beautiful daughter—and ſo, oud you believe it, ſo ſhe died—and when the dear creature ſaw that ſo be

her mother lay a corpſe afore her eyes, ſhe did go out on one fit into another, till ſo be that ſhe bring'd a poor dear little boy child into the world afore his time — and *dead* heaven bleſs it —! Lack-a-day! how us all did take on for the loſs on our dear good old lady, and the little young baronet—but ſo it was to be—our dear young lady recover'd very ſoon—and that did be a vaſt comfort to us all — and Sir Gervas grow'd ſo happy agen, and look'd ſo well—Lord bleſs his honour! he did be a very handſome man in they days—Lack-aday! how time and bitter ſorrow do ha' alter'd un! for Oh! Lady, I will tell you—after the boy, Lady Clifford did have a girl, our ſweet little Elinor—ſure enough, I do believe ſuch another baby did never be ſeed on the yearth for beauty, and then when it grow'd a tiny bit, and run'd about, how ſenſible it did be, talking juſt ſo be like

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an angel! aye, and looking like one too, for all the world! Lovely baby, it did be too good for us—and the mother too—for, alack-a-day! when our pretty little Elinor did be turn'd of three years old, our poor dear Lady who did be fond o'riding, fall'd off on her horſe, who ſtumbled over the root of a tree in our own grove, and ſhe did be throw'd wi' ſuch a force, that ſhe broked a blood veſſel—and did be bringed home ſpeechleſs—! Howſomever, ſhe grow'd better ater that, but nevertheleſs ſhe goed into a decline, and waſted away juſt to a ſhadow, and the dear baby took'd the meazles—and, ater them, had a cough that fall'd on its lungs, and ſo the two lovely creatures both died in leſs than three weeks one ater the other. There did be a heavy ſtroke for his honor, our dear maſter! Alack-a-day! he has never got the better on it—never—in all theſe years"

Jenkins paused—he could not proceed—The tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks. Elinor was greatly affected — when she could speak, she asked:

"Which did my uncle lose first, his wife, or child?"

"Oh! the child—the child—the darling baby fetched her last dear breath upon the bosom of her dying mother. Only think o'that, young lady! only think o'that! But she bore it for all her weak state better than his honor. She comforted him like an angel, and made un calm and quiet. But, Oh! lack-a-day! when she died, her own dear self, he had no comforting angel to speak peace to un then. Mercy on us! how distracted he did be! we thought we oud ha losed him too—but no—heaven be praised! he did be spared to us—though,

though, lack-a-day! he do be ſadly altered for the worſe! no wonder—no wonder—he do ha' lived in a ſtrange way ever ſince. He did turn away all his ſervants, only but Rachel and me—and then he—hark! I do hear his honor call. Dear, *dear* Lady, do unt tell un that ſo be I ha a beed talking o Lady Clifford, only for fear a do think that I may ha' told *all*, and then, dear Lady, he oud never forgi' me, mayhap; cauſe ſo be I promiſed not to tell; and I oud unt make un angry for all in the world that I oud unt."

"I give you my word that I will not ſay any thing to my uncle of what you have been telling me—I am much obliged to you for this particular account of Lady Clifford's and the child's death—my uncle calls you again."

When Jenkins was gone, Elinor reflected deeply on the pathetic narration ſhe had juſt heard, and the tears rolled faſt over the one ſhe held in her hand.

" Dear unfortunate uncles! Great, indeed, have been your ſufferings! diſmal Priory! gloomy apartments! where death has reigned in triumph! frowning rock, rugged ſepulchre of the hapleſs Clifford! how mournfully your cypreſs plumage waves before my aching ſight! And you, pale gothic ſpires! for ever ſay: 'Here, Elinor, *here* lies your murdered father.' Merciful God! preſerve my ſenſes amidſt theſe ſcenes of horror! and yet—ſome dreadful myſtery remains untold—what can it be! ſomething concerning Lady Clifford and her chamber — ſomething Sir Gervas fears that I ſhould know—what *all* did Jenkins mean! my uncle too talked of a

ſplendid

ſplendid chamber in which he ſaid there was no room for him. Then haſtily turned the converſation. It is very ſtrange! I ſhall never recover my ſpirits in this place. I will aſk to ſee that ſplendid chamber, and, if poſſible, find out the myſtery—I wiſh Dr. R. were here; I long to ſee him."

Sir Gervas entercd the room, and, after looking around him for ſome time, ſaid gloomily:

"Aye, aye, they do well enough ſo. Now, I hope you are eaſy. You will not be knocked o'the head by any of your anceſtors.—Come here, child, I want to talk to you. Sit down—now, tell me if you really think that Dr. R. your father's executor will come to Clifford Priory."

"I hope

"I hope ſo, ſir—he promiſed me that he would, and he ſays ſo again in his letter. I hope he will be as good as his word."

"But *I* do not *hope* any ſuch thing, Elinor. What buſineſs has he to come down here? No, no; I do not want him: let him ſtay in town and take care of his patients and your father's affairs; he need not conſult me about any thing. I have taken you out of the way, and that is enough for me; he muſt manage all the reſt, and pay the debts as faſt as he can. I will not give a half-penny towards paying them; ſo, he need not aſk me: nor will I be plagued with company at my time of life."

"Dr. R. ſir, is a very amiable man. You will find him an agreeable compa-

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nion: his converſation will enliven and entertain you, my dear uncle."

"No ſuch thing, child, no ſuch thing; he will put me out of my way. Mind me, Elinor; if you will conform to my retired manner of living, I ſhall love you—but if you cannot be eaſy without bringing your town acquaintance after you,—it will not do for me. Therefore, if you wiſh to oblige me, write to this Doctor immediately, and tell him that you cannot poſſibly ſee him at Clifford Priory, becauſe your uncle does not like company, as it is too fatiguing for him. See, there, now, you are crying about this too! Indeed, Elinor, you are a ſimple girl, a *very* ſimple girl! God help me! unfortunate man that I am! what ſhall I do with you? Inſtead of being a comfort to me, you add to my troubles. I have endeavoured to make every thing agreeable to you: yet, you

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are always crying—and always running into miſchief. Firſt, you loſt yourſelf in the labyrinth, at dark, and I had to fetch you out. Then, you went into the cell and frightened yourſelf into fits, though it was day light, and I had much ado to bring you to yourſelf again. Then you ſet my beſt lamp in the chimney and let it be broke to pieces, and becauſe one picture fell down, you cried for fear all the reſt ſhould fall upon your head. And, to night, I ſuppoſe you will be afraid of going to bed, becauſe they are ſo near you. Alas-a-day! you will be a ſad torment to your poor uncle, if you go on at this rate, Elinor. And then, the worſt of all is to want ſtrangers to viſit here. No, no; I will have none of them—viſitors from town, indeed! when I do not let my good neighbours in the country come to ſee me: that will never do, child. Forbid him—forbid him immediately."

Poor

Poor Elinor was too much afflicted, to interrupt Sir Gervas in his pettiſh diſcourſe. The idea of Dr. R's coming had tormented him in the night. The more he thought of it, the more diſagreeable it appeared to him. And the breaking of the lamp—and Elinor's fears about the pictures quite diſconcerted him—he thought ſhe was very careleſs and fooliſhly timid. This opinion added greatly to the ill-humour of Sir Gervas, who was meanly parſimonious and childiſhly peeviſh, at the moſt trifling accident, or the ſlighteſt contradiction, and who being entirely void of fear himſelf, was always diſpleaſed at the leaſt appearance of it in others. The extreme beauty and gentle affectionate behaviour of his niece delighted him at her firſt arrival, and the tears ſhe ſhed for her father he thought were natural and deſerved pity and conſolation. He exerted himſelf to the utmoſt

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in order to comfort her, and now, he was ſeriouſly angry and diſappointed, to find his endeavours to cheer her were ineffectual, as he did not make the leaſt allowance for the weakneſs of depreſt ſpirits: and Elinor, who was unacquainted with her uncle's diſpoſition, was overwhelmed with ſorrow, at his treating her, with what ſhe thought, unfeeling contempt. When the ſad hiſtory of his beloved Lydia had prepared her to receive him with redoubled affection, what a cruel repulſe did his unkindneſs give to her ſympathizing heart, that now throbbed with various ſenſations which ſhe found it impoſſible to ſuppreſs for ſome time, till ſeeing Sir Gervas gaze around the apartment, with a look that ſpoke the agonizing reflections of his mind, pity and affection overcame every other feeling of her breaſt, and ſhe threw herſelf at his feet, ſaying pathetically:

"Oh!

"Oh! my dear uncle, forgive your Elinor—I cannot bear your anger—you are my only friend and protector—to whom can I go, if you diſcard me?"

"Well, well, well! I will forgive you, poor thing! Get up, get up. I do believe you love me—but you do not know me—and indeed, how ſhould you, ſeeing you have lived ſo little a while at the Priory. And for that reaſon, I will forgive your fears too—and, God help you! I ſuppoſe you thought that I might like company as well as yourſelf, who have been brought up in a gay crowd. So, I will forgive you for aſking Doctor what you call him to viſit us. So, all will be well, if you will write time enough to prevent him from coming. Philip Hawthorn can take your letter to-morrow; it is market day. Come, come; I know

I know you will do what you can to oblige your poor uncle. Do, my dear love, be cheery and happy, and ſtrive to comfort an old man who loves you."

"Do you love me! will you let me comfort you, my dear, dear uncle? then I ſhall be happy."

She aroſe from her knees—and throwing her arms around his neck, kiſſed him affectionately, while he tenderly preſſed her to his boſom, and, fondly returning her careſſes—ſaid.

"Now, you are, indeed, my child—my Elinor Clifford ——."

The tenderneſs of Sir Gervas removed the weight of grief that oppreſſed the ſoul

ſoul of Elinor, and ſhe felt comparatively happy, till he left her to write a letter ſo repugnant to her wiſhes and to her ideas of friendſhip and politeneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

HEARTS DELINEATED.

BEFORE ELINOR could ſettle herſelf to begin her diſagreeable letter, Sir Gervas returned and ſaid:

"Though I do not love writing, yet Elinor, I think it will be better for me to write to the doctor, than you; for, I know you will be making a thouſand unneceſſary apologies for an old man's whims, when they do not need any. Now *I* will tell him the plain truth at once, and not affront him neither. No, no, I will take care of that—I have written

written to him before, you know. I do not know if he ſhowed you my letter; but I ſuppoſe he did, becauſe it concerned yourſelf—and you ſhall ſee this letter. I muſt go down in my ſtudy, and wipe my ſpectacles—and look for a ſheet of paper—and can you mend me a pen, my good girl?"

"Here are pens and paper, ſir, at your ſervice and ſome good ink. I will carry them down for you, if you chooſe to write in your ſtudy."

"Yes, my love, yes, I have got a bit of fire there and my eaſy chair—I ſhall ſit more comfortably. Come, come, I will make a beginning before dinner, and if I can but finiſh it, why, then, I can take my nap in peace—*You* muſt direct it for me and ſeal it, that will ſave me ſome time and trouble. If I can but get it done all to that, I

ſhall

ſhall eat my dinner with a good appetite. I do not like to have any thing upon my ſpirits. Old age, Elinor, feels more than youth can poſſibly conceive. The Scripture beautifully expreſſes the weakneſs of age where it ſays 'The graſshopper ſhall be a burthen.' Well, well! it muſt be endured—will you carry theſe things down for me, my pretty love? becauſe I muſt hold by the banniſters, and I have got my ſtick."

When Sir Gervas was ſettled to his writing, Elinor returned to her own apartment and tuned the inſtrument as well as ſhe was able, and in the box ſhe found a large collection of the beſt ancient muſic — the modern ſhe had brought with her. She ſelected the moſt pathetic airs in the Meſſiah, which ſhe ſung in the firſt ſtyle. Theſe were well ſuited to an afflicted mind; yet, before ſhe ſhut the harpſichord, ſhe ſung

ſung Sir Clement Darnley's ſong twice over—her heart as uſual encoring it. This ſong, the letter, picture, and bouquet, ſtill preſerved in the inlaid box, were Elinor's richeſt treaſures. To theſe ſhe flew for conſolation in her ſaddeſt moments, and they had always the power to tranquillize her mind. She now placed the beloved bouquet in her boſom—contemplated the almoſt adored portrait—and taking the guitar, placed herſelf at the window that commanded a proſpect of the ſea, and once more ſung the darling ſong, while ſhe anxiouſly wiſhed, as ſhe beheld a veſſel in full ſail, gliding along, that it would bring her Darnley to the banks of Clifford Grove.

As ſhe ſat, loſt in a train of p'eaſing ideas, Sir Gervas entered the room. She jumped haſtily off the commode—her looks were gay, her motion aerial.

She had unpinned her robe, to place the bouquet that but partially concealed a boſom, whoſe whiteneſs was the more conſpicuous from the black muſlin that lay upon it—beneath the flowers hung dazzling, the ſplendidly adorned miniature. Sir Gervas aſtoniſhed at the gay appearance of his niece, ſaid:

"How now! what is all this for? where are you going, Elinor, that you are dreſſed ſo fine?"

"*Fine*, ſir! I have not changed my dreſs, ſince I got up."

"But you have put on artificial flowers, and diamonds, my child and look very ſhowy all together."

Elinor held down her head and bluſhed—ſhe was aſhamed of her inadvertency, and did not know how to excuſe

cuſe herſelf. She, however, ſaid, hesitatingly:

"I had theſe flowers in a box, ſir, and I put them on to ſurpriſe you. I thought they looked ſo pretty, that you would take them for natural ones."

"No, no; I have lived in the country all my life. You may impoſe upon Londoners, my dear; but not upon country people; we know nature from art too well. But the *diamonds*, child, what did you want me to take *them* for? Stars, I ſuppoſe—ſtay, Elinor, ſtay, let me ſee poor Charles before you put him up."

Elinor, now bluſhing ſtill deeper, ſaid,

"Sir, *this* is not my father's picture."

"So, ſo, is it not, my bluſhing little girl—well, well! let me have a peep at the young baronet, my nephew that is to be—Come, come, do not be ſo baſhful: I dare ſay he will bear to be looked at—upon my word! a very handſome young fellow! I ſuppoſe he gave you this, when he went abroad—and here is his hair and a cypher on the back—very pretty, indeed, and very rich—let me tell you, it is fit for a princeſs and not too good for my Elinor Clifford—you will be a very rich heireſs, child, at my death—but he muſt not expect a halfpenny with you before—no, no, not a halfpenny."

"Dr. R. was to have brought my father's and my mother's pictures with him. I left them to be ſet in jet, till I can afford diamonds."

"Oh!

"Oh! aye, that's true, the doctor —here is my letter—I brought it up to ſhow you—read it—I have taken a great deal of pains to write it well, for I am quite out of practice of writing now-a-days. Here, here, take the letter and give me the baronet—I will make myſelf acquainted with him—I am glad I came up in my ſpectacles.—Thank you, my dear child—I will not let him fall—though, alas-a-day! my fingers are not ſo ſure as they uſed to be —read, Elinor, read it aloud—"

Elinor obeying, read as follows.

"Sir,

My niece tells me that you are ſo good as to have an intention to pay me a viſit. It is very kind of you, to be ſure: but, to be free with you,

I never ſee company, ſo I hope you will not take it amiſs if I decline your viſit. I aſſure you it is not out of any diſreſpect to you: no, indeed, ſir. I have a very good opinion of you, from what Elinor ſays—but I am a very old fellow, ſir, and live by rule. I get up early—breakfaſt upon milk and vegetables—dine at one—ſup at ſix—and go to bed at eight—thoſe hours will not ſuit company. Beſides, I have only two ſervants, as old as myſelf, who cannot bear the fatigue of viſitors, better than I can. So, I hope you will not be affronted—then, ſir, as I do not ride myſelf, and my horſes are all dead, the ſtable has gone to ruin, and the coach-houſe is unroofed: ſo, you ſee it is impoſſible for me to accommodate viſitors, nor have I one room I believe fit for them to ſleep in. I had much ado to find one for my niece; but, poor thing! you know ſhe has a *right* to

live in it—ſhe will be my heireſs, and I ſhall leave enough to pay for repairing every thing. If ſhe does not chooſe to live here in the manner I do, ſhe may do as ſhe likes when I am gone—ſhe is a good girl, excepting a few fears which I hope will wear off by degrees, as ſhe knows the old Priory a little better—and I hope alſo ſhe will leave off crying about every trifle. Believe me, ſir, ſhe has ſhed as many tears, becauſe it was not convenient for me to have you here, as if I were going to kill you, and that is ſo childiſh! Well, well! ſhe is very young, ſure enough; ſhe will grow wiſer in time. I love the poor thing, I aſſure you, for all her faults, becauſe I ſuppoſe ſhe cannot help them, and it would be very ill-natured to diſlike her for them.

Heaven bleſs and preſerve you, ſir, and your good family—Elinor tells me

that you have an amiable wife and children. *You* are a happy man, I ſhould have been happy too, even at theſe years, if *mine* had been ſpared. Oh! my dear ſir, many ſeaſons have rolled over my head, ſince I loſt them: yet, the renewal of ſpring is always painful to me—I ſaw my own little Elinor gay and lovely, as the ſeaſon, rejoicing as ſhe beheld the bloſſoms opening that were to give her fruit: but, alas! alas! before the fruit appeared, *my bloſſom* was *blighted*. My wife too, beautiful as Milton repreſents our firſt mother, ſaw with delight the young leaves deck our favorite bowers with their tender verdure: but, ere they could afford a ſhade, no ſummer ſun could warm *her* clay-cold form—and they were no more to me the bliſsful bowers of paradiſe—you, ſir, are a fond huſband—a tender father—you will know how to pity me—you will not wonder that I do not live in the world

and

and ſee company after ſuch loſſes—I have written a very long letter; but old age is never very conciſe—I hope I have not tired you, my good ſir, nor offended you; for, to do either was not the intention of your very ſincere friend, and humble ſervant,

GERVAS CLIFFORD.

Elinor joins me in reſpects to yourſelf and worthy family—ſhe will write ſoon to you."

Poor Elinor ſobbed over the latter part of the letter. Sir Gervas got up and went into the cloſet, where he ſtaid ſome time. Elinor kept her ſeat till he returned — his grief was ſacred — ſhe would not interrupt it.—He came out ſmiling, though the tears gliſtened on

his venerable cheeks; he gave her Sir Clement's picture and ſaid:

"Well, my child! I admire this young man much—he has a ſenſible face—not one of the Clifford's can ſhow a better, and that is ſaying a great deal, let me tell you, a *great deal.* I ſhall be glad to ſee the original. We *muſt* find a bed for him ſomewhere. He is a lover, and will be glad to ſleep in the old ſtables, or in uncle Clifford's little bed in the cell, if I will let him ſee you and give my conſent that you ſhall have him. I ſhall not mind *his* coming of a pin's point, no, no; he will be happy any where, ſo as he is near you, and contented with hermit's ſtraw and hermit's food, if he is a true lover, which heaven ſend he may be, for your ſake, my poor girl! Not but your fortune will buy you a huſband at any time; ſo,

ſo, you need not mind, though he ſhould prove falſe. Never cry about him, my child, becauſe you know you may get a better.—It has dried up nicely. After dinner, Elinor, you ſhall take a walk with this letter to the farm: it will amuſe you to ſee the good folks. But do not go in diamonds and artificial flowers, becauſe it will look odd, ſeeing they do not underſtand the faſhions of fine town ladies. Ah! Roger — what! is dinner ready! I am glad of that. Come, my dear child, come."

Elinor ſtaid but to lock up her bouquet and tie on the picture, which ſhe concealed, as uſual, underneath her robe; nor did ſhe feel diſpleaſed that Sir Gervas had ſeen it in that accidental manner. Even ſmiles dimpled her cheeks, at the idea of her meeting him

ſo adorned, and, with a heart more at eaſe than it had been for many weeks, ſhe tripped gaily down ſtairs, and was a pleaſant companion to her uncle on whom her cheerfulneſs was not loſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE FARM-HOUSE.

WHEN SIR GERVAS was aſleep, Elinor ſet out for Milbrook farm. To walk alone beyond a garden was quite new and unpleaſant to her. She did not wiſh for the liveried attendants of ſtate; ſhe only wiſhed for a *companion*.—Solitude made the grove appear gloomy and the fields cheerleſs. The wooden bridge that led to the ruſtic garden was beheld with pleaſure. Gladly ſhe entered the abode of peace and induſtry, where

where her preſence made a little holiday. The happy family received her with reſpectful joy; pleaſure enlivened each honeſt countenance. The farmer—his wife, Philip Hawthorn and his ſiſter ſtood making a number of awkward reverences, while Roſe, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, ſaid:

"Deary me! my Lady, how good you do be to comed over to ſee us! There, your Ladyſhip; this do be father, and this mother, and this do be couſin Betſey—you have ſeed Phil already at the Priry, ſo you knows him."

"Roſe, Roſe! how you do prate, laſs! Let her good Ladyſhip comed into the beſt parlor and ſit down ater her walk."

"Yes, maſter, that ſhe ſhall, bleſs her dear heart! how pleaſed I do be,

to

to ha' a lady o' the Priry comed into my poor houſe! but it do be clean, your Ladyſhip, though it do be but homely. Be pleaſed to ſit down in the great chair, your honor."

"This is a very comfortable chair, indeed, my good Mrs. Milbrook."

"Aye, ſo my ſon Val's good maſter, Sir Clement Darnley, has often ſaid, when he do ha' beed ſitting in it."

Elinor looked delighted and found the chair much eaſier than before. Mrs. Milbrook continued:

"It never did ha' beend uſed, only but when I laid-in, till ſo be his dear honor did be drowned in our brook. Then maſter fetched it down, agen his honor got out on the bed where we had put un. And, bleſs his dear heart! he did

did ſpeak to us ſo mild and gentle, and did be ſo thankful, only 'cauſe ſo be I did by un juſt as if he had beed my own child, and that did be nothing more than right, your Ladyſhip, if ſo be he had only been'd a poor lad that had a beed drown'd, ſo as he did be a dear creater. But, God be praiſed! we ſoon did bring un to rights agen, thof ſo be he do ha' taked my poor dear ſon Val, acroſs the wide ſea, to a ſtrange land wi un. Heaven, I hope, will protect um both and bring um ſafe back agen, bleſs um both!"

Elinor ſaid moſt emphatically:

"I hope it will, Mrs. Milbrook!"

"Amen!—And ſo, as I tell'd your Ladyſhip, this chair did be bring'd down for his honor, and he ſaid to my maſter—'My good Farmer Milbrook, you

you ſhall call this chair mine—keep it in conſtant uſe and think of Darnley whom your care has reſtored to life, whenever you ſit in it. I have found ſuch comfort in it, that I will buy it of you—if you will let it ſtand here ready for me whenever I viſit you; and only think, your Ladyſhip! he gied maſter a whole hundred pound for it! Yet he do let it ſtill bide here along wi' us, ſo we do call it Sir Clement Darnley's chair, and I hopes as how ſo be your Ladyſhip's honor will comed many a time and oft to ſit down in it."

Farmer Milbrook, who had left the room, returned with a bottle of currant wine and a baſket, in which were pears, apples, and nuts, and he told Elinor, if ſhe would ſtay till milking time, ſhe ſhould have a fine ſyllabub. Elinor had been accuſtomed to good things, ſhe was pleaſed at the little banquet

banquet that ſtood before her, and alſo at the mention of a ſyllabub, of which ſhe was extremely fond; but ſhe felt ſtill more delighted when Betſey ſaid:

"Mother, ſhall I put on the tea-kettle? mayhap her Ladyſhip will take a cup wi us."

"So, you drink *tea* here."

"Oh! yes, your Ladyſhip, morning and aternoon, my daughters and I, the father and Phil do unt mind it much."

"My uncle calls it poiſon and will not let it be made in his houſe, nor coffee neither—nor does he, I believe, like wine. I have not ſeen him drink any, ſince I have been at the Priory."

"Lack-a-daiſy! and he do ha' got a plenty; for, I do make his worſhip all the

all the red and white currants and raſp-berries that do grow in his garden into wine, and jams and jellies, cauſe it do be too much trouble for Dame Rachel now-a-days. Well! to be ſure, he do hoard it all up, juſt ſo be as um do his money. Well! Lord bleſs him wi it! It do be all his own, that's for certain—he may do what a like's wi it. Do come here every day, your Ladyſhip, and you ſhall ha tea and wine, and every thing that the farm affords. We do ha' a plenty; we ſhall never miſs what you do like to eat or to drink; and, if ſo be that we *did*, you do be heartily welcome to it."

"You are very kind, my good Mrs. Milbrook—I will often walk over to ſee you, if my uncle will let me."

"Oh dear! your Ladyſhip! will you be ſo kind as to let father and mother

mother look at Sir Clement Darnley's picture, only to ſee how very like it do be."

Elinor gave the miniature to Roſe, who ſhowed it to her mother, ſhe exclaimed:

"O! goodneſs me! lack-a-daiſy! bleſſings on it, why if it be unt his honor's very *own* ſelf—ſee, maſter, how like it do be—there's his dear honor—Ah! that we had our poor dear Val, to look at, all day long."

"Aye, aye, wife: but thee forgetteſt, child, that they fine things do be only for fine folks and not for the like o'us. Val, thof he be our own dear boy, is no more nor leſs than a ſervant, and we be only but honeſt farmers. This do be Val's *maſter*—and ſhe who do have it, is Sir Gervaſes Clifford's niece,

niece, a great Lady—the Lady o' the Priory. Remember all that, wife, and do unt wiſh for what do unt becomed us to have — ſure enough, it does my heart good to look at un—may I be ſo bold as to ax your Ladyſhip when his honor will comed back to dear old England agen?"

"It depends entirely upon Mr. Darnley's health—Sir Clement will not return without him—if the poor gentleman ſhould die — then he will come back directly to England; if he lives, Sir Clement will go with him to Italy."

"Well, well! it muſt be as God do pleaſe. We muſt ſubmit. Val loves his maſter and will like to ſee the world —ſo, he will be happy enough, excepting only that he may wiſh to take a peep into our farm, poor lad, to ſee us all;

more

more eſpecially his dear little Betſey Bloſſom, as he did uſe to call her."

"Aye, maſter ſays true; he will want to ha' a look at ſhe, for Val will never be falſe hearted, I do be certain, that a never ont—yet ſhe do be feard on it—but I do unt believe any ſuch a thing—no, no, my ſon Valentine do be a good lad—and he do ha' gotten a good maſter—ſo what ſhould make un falſe hearted, I wonder! ſhe need not take on ſo about un, as ſhe do ſometimes, need ſhe, your Ladyſhip?"

Elinor looked at Betſey Hawthorn, who ſtood bluſhing like a roſe behind her aunt's chair, and formed a beautiful contraſt to her couſin, being delicately fair, with almoſt flaxen hair falling in a thouſand ringlets from a cottage bonnet, decorated with blue ribbons. When her

her modeſt eyes met Elinor's, they reſembled violets gliſtening with dew: yet, ſhe ſmiled as ſhe ſaid:

"No, mother, no. I be unt ſad—I do be very eaſy about un, cauſe ſo be a ca'unt help ſtaying away; it do unt be Val's fault a bit, you know. Only ſometimes, I do be a tiny bit feared that ſo be the French may kill poor couſin Val, or that mayhap the ſea will ſwallow un up—I did be feared laſt night, leſt ſo be he were upon the roaring waves. Ah! deary me! pray, your Ladyſhip, do you think that ſo be Val's maſter did be on the ſea, ſailing in a ſhip, laſt terrible night?"

"I hope not: or, if they ſhould, the ſtorm did not reach ſo far, perhaps."

"Ah! deary me! yes, your Ladyſhip, it did reach all over the ſky indeed

deed—cauſe I got up on purpoſe to look—and when morning firſt ſhined upon the Priry chapel, the wind's great ugly mouth o'top on it did blow the loud thunder, and the blue flaming lightning all a-way to the ſouth, where our dear Valentine do be, heaven keep un from it!"

"And reſtore him ſoon, to reward ſuch perfect love! for, I am ſure he will never find more ſincere affection, nor greater beauty than he has left in his native home."

"Aye, bleſs my girls! they be as nature made um, your Ladyſhip: healthy and good-hearted. Dutiful to my Dame and me, and loving to their brothers, dear boys, who do be every bit as well favoured and as good as their ſiſters. God bleſs um all together! they do be the comfort on our lives—they

do

do be gay as larks and as playful as lambs. I wiſhes your dear young Lady-ſhip bided along wi us—be unt it terrible dolourſome at the Priry, all among old people, and other ſtrange ſort o'things?"

"It is not, I muſt own, ſo cheerful as your houſe, farmer Milbrook: but, if I can make my uncle happy, by living with him, I ſhall not mind the gloomineſs of my own ſituation."

"Ah! dear Lady, we muſt take a long look over to the days of happineſs. When our Val is come back, to bide at home, and his good maſter will be the young Lord o' the manor. The old Priry will be a gay place when they days do come. Bleſs his generous heart! he will not be ſo hard wi' all the poor tenants, as Sir Gervas do be, heaven forgi um for it! a makes many a diſ-

treſſed man tremble, when pay-day do come."

"Aye, ſo a does—Maſter do ſay true; Sir Gervas do be terrible ſevere, ſure enough. And yet, my maſter do ſay all a can for our poor neighbours—but ah! it do only diſpleaſe his honor, and make un angry, and ſay in a paſſion: 'do unt tell me, farmer, about this and that: I will have my right—I will have my right. If I forgive one, why then, ſo I muſt another—I can't do it—I can't do it—and ſo a goes on, when mayhap a tiny bit o time oud make all eaſy."

"You ſhall tell me, Mrs. Milbrook, when any body is particularly diſtreſt, and I will plead for them to my uncle; perhaps I may be ſucceſsful. If you can lend me a ſaddle-horſe, I will ride about and make myſelf acquainted with the

the tenants' families and circumſtances, and they ſhall find me a friend."

"Dear Lady! you be very good: but you muſt unt talk o' riding to his honor, Sir Gervas; he ca' unt bear it, never ſince ſo be the young Lady Clifford did get her death by a ſad fall off her own horſe in the grove. He oud be ſo feared, poor gentleman! to ſee you a top on a horſe—!"

"Then, I will not think of it. I would not for the world remind him of that dreadful accident.—I will walk to thoſe who are neareſt—my friend Roſe muſt introduce me to them."

Elinor felt herſelf ſo happy at the farm, that ſhe ſcarcely knew how to quit it, till fearing, as it grew duſk, that her uncle would be uneaſy, ſhe came

away accompanied by the two girls and Philip. Though Roſe was her earlieſt acquaintance, Elinor found Betſey far more agreeable to her taſte. The gentleneſs of her manners—the extreme delicacy of her form and face, conſidering the little care a girl in her ſituation can take of her perſon, both ſurpriſed and delighted Elinor, and the ſimilarity of their fates intereſted her greatly. Their ſouls were warmed by the pureſt and tendereſt love for abſent objects, who were together. Their thoughts flew to the ſame place—their wiſhes, their anxieties were the ſame—ſympathy united them in a ſincere friendſhip. Elinor leaned on Betſey's arm with confidential affection, while the happy Roſe was running about and playing little comical tricks with the laughing Philip, who delighted in her mirth. Nor were theſe who mourned the abſence of their favorites ſo ſelfiſh, as not to enjoy the mu-

mutual felicity of their cheerful companions.

Elinor loitered as ſhe drew towards the Priory—ſhe had left the abode of innocent mirth for that of terrific gloom. She ſtrove to ſhake off the ſadneſs the ſight of it occaſioned; but it was impoſſible for her to conquer her feelings. Her young companions were to leave her at the garden, and ſhe ſaw that they were eager to turn away from *her* diſmal home, which, like the cave of Trophonius had ſpread a melancholy gloom over the ſo lately mirthful faces of Roſe and Philip, while terror and compaſſion marked the expreſſive features of the gentle Betſey, who, as ſhe preſſed the hand of Elinor to her lips, with affectionate timidity, bedewed it with her tears, but did not ſpeak. Roſe could not be ſilent; ſhe exclaimed:

"Oh! deary me! how I do hate to leave your dear Ladyſhip in this doleſome place! No, no, you can never be happy it it, I do be ſure even Philip, who do be a man oud be feared to bide in it. Ah! dear, dear, that ever ſuch plaguy places ſhould ha beend builded —well! heaven preſerve your dear Ladyſhip! but I wiſhes that ſo be you were going back to our farm along wi us, that I does."

Elinor wiſhed ſo too in her own mind, but concealing her uneaſineſs, promiſed to viſit them again very ſoon and parted from them with apparent cheerfulneſs. Without indulging any fearful or melancholy thoughts, ſhe ran haſtily to the ſtudy, where ſhe found Sir Gervas waiting ſupper for her, and rather diſpleaſed at her making it ſo late, before ſhe came home. He had walked in the garden,

garden, and anxiouſly watched for her, till, too weary and cold to ſtay longer, he returned to the houſe quite diſappointed. Elinor was truly ſorry, when ſhe heard *that*, and expreſſed herſelf ſo affectionately, that he ſoon came into a better humour.

When they parted for the night, Elinor was greatly mortified at having only two inches of candle, to light her to bed and ſhe regretted that ſhe had not deſired Philip to buy her a lamp. However, ſhe had the happineſs to prevail on Rachel to let her have a whole candle for that one night, and ſhe alſo prevailed on Jenkins to go over to the farm early enough to ſee Philip, before he ſet out, and give him money and directions for the lamp. With theſe great

conſolations, Elinor went to bed in tolerable ſpirits, though ſhe had much rather have ſat all night in Sir Clement Darnley's chair at the farm-houſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

NEWS FROM DUBLIN.

ELINOR grew every day more reconciled to her ſolitary ſituation.—Sir Gervas took a very great pleaſure in hearing her play and ſing. If he did not chooſe to go up ſtairs, the guitar was brought down to the ſtudy. If he walked in his garden, he ſaw it in beautiful order. He ſaw alſo his greenhouſe plants in a moſt promiſing ſtate. Elinor delighted him greatly by new covering a folding-ſkreen, and deco-

rating it with her paintings—the fineſt views around the Priory entertained him by his fire-ſide, and as the flowers ſprung up in his garden he beheld them bloom on his ſkreen.

More than a month elapſed without any particular event, during which time Dr. R. ſent the pictures and ring, with a polite letter to Sir Gervas, and one incloſed, from Colonel Gayton to Elinor. The latter apologized for Lady Stanmore's not writing upon a ſubject, which had ſo greatly affected her health and ſpirits, that ſhe had kept her bed three weeks and was not yet recovered ſufficiently to leave the houſe of Lord Dromlarney, who expected his Lady and the Melvins the week the Colonel writ to Elinor. She was not ſurpriſed at the effect her father's death had on Lady Stanmore, who had not only the loſs of

a very

a very dear brother to grieve for, but that he died in diſpleaſure with her.

Elinor wrote immediately to her aunt, and ſaid every thing her affectionate heart could dictate to conſole her under ſuch deep affliction, though ſhe herſelf was now very uneaſy at not hearing from Sir Clement Darnley.

Lady Stanmore was not long before ſhe anſwered Elinor's kind letter, in the following manner:

"For heaven's ſake! my dear girl, why did you not come to Ireland with Lady Dromlarney? how is it poſſible that you can ſtay with ſuch a ſuperannuated miſer as my uncle Gervas, and in ſuch a deteſtable place as old Clifford Priory! are you not already melancholy mad? Lady Dromlarney, the

Duke, and Lord and Lady Melvin, are all well after their voyage; they have had letters from Sir Clement, who found Mr. Darnley well enough to ſet out for Italy, ſoon after he arrived at Montpelier.

Gayton has had an offer of a very honourable and lucrative eſtabliſhment in the Eaſt, and I am ſo partial to my native quarter of the globe, that I am delighted beyond any thing with the idea of viſiting it once more. I left Bengal with an old ugly fellow: how charming to return to it with a huſband like my Gayton—ſo handſome—ſo fine a dancer too! the fellow will do a great deal of miſchief there, I am ſure! Oh! how the ladies will envy me! Come with us, Elinor; you cannot do better for yourſelf, child. Your beauty will ſoon get you a rich huſband there, particularly

ticularly as your uncle muſt reſide in great ſtate and that will give you conſequence. In England, you are abſolutely a loſt thing, even ſhould you return to the great world. Slights and contempt will meet you every where, as poverty is a crime that can never be overlooked. Do not let Sir Clement Darnley ſtand in your way, for his relations never mention you but talk publicly of his marriage with the Duke's niece as a fixed thing. Therefore I adviſe you not to think of him, nor to waſte your days in the horrid ſolitude your diſtreſs of mind and circumſtances obliged you at firſt to fly to. You, who are an Eaſt-Indian as well as myſelf, can have no objection to living in your native climate. So, prepare for your voyage, and I will give you the earlieſt intelligence of when we ſhall

ſet

ſet out, and from where. Adieu, my dear girl, and believe me

Your ever
affectionate aunt,
H. STANMORE."

Gayton's love attends you, and pray, tell Sir Gervas we deſire our duty to him."

This letter was not in the leaſt pleaſing to Elinor. Sir Clement had written to others and not to her—his family openly rejected her. Theſe painful thoughts uſurped for ſome time dominion over her mind, till ſhe conſidered, that, by ſome unlucky chance, a letter to her or Dr. R. might have miſcarried. She could not long doubt his love—ſhe was ſure he would not promiſe to marry any body, till the expiration of the two years; therefore, ſhe ſoon baniſhed

niſhed all fears in regard to the Duke's niece, and placed an implicit confidence in the affection Sir Clement had profeſſed for her, and reſolved never to condemn him without having juſt cauſe from his own conduct. She was equally firm in her reſolution to ſtay with Sir Gervas, according to her father's requeſt, even though her ſituation had been far more lonely and diſagreeable than it really was. When ſhe mentioned Lady Stanmore's wiſh to her uncle, for ſhe did not dare to ſhow him the letter, he was very much diſpleaſed that ſhe ſhould want to take Elinor from him: nor could he be at all eaſy, till he had ſeen her anſwer with an abſolute refuſal, which ſhe had endeavoured to ſoften as much as poſſible by expreſſions of gratitude: for, Elinor was not inſenſible that her aunt's propoſal was with the kindeſt intention of promoting her intereſt and happineſs and demanded the

moſt

moſt affectionate delicacy on her ſide, in declining an offer ſo apparently brilliant to one whoſe circumſtances were ſo humbled. Elinor had not a deſire to return to Bengal, as then ſhe ſhould be out of all hope of ſeeing Sir Clement Darnley, from whom ſhe ſtill flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould hear very ſoon: and ſhe thought that, if it were poſſible, the great change in her ſituation ſince he left England, or any other reaſon ſhould alter his ſentiments, the gloom of the Priory would then correſpond with the gloom of her mind, and ſhe ſhould not have the dreadful mortification of meeting him at public places, with the happy object of his choice. She was very ſure he would avoid coming to Milbrook farm, if he knew ſhe was near it — for whatever might be his motive for marrying another, ſhe knew he would retain too ſincere a friendſhip to give her unneceſſary pain.

The

The cheerfulneſs of the ſeaſon, and the lengthening days conſpired to enliven Elinor, who now amuſed herſelf with preparing the promiſed nuptial preſents for Roſe and her fair couſin. On looking over the clothes, ſhe found a ſufficient quantity to enable her to give the two girls, Mrs. Milbrook, and Dame Rachel, a compleat ſtock of bettermoſt apparel. Between the laſt two, ſhe divided the plaineſt of the old faſhioned ſilks. After ſhe had made a proper aſſortment, one or the other of the girls came every day to the Priory, for a few hours, to modernize them, according to her directions.

Every thing was ready and ſent home to the farm, before the happy day arrived, and never were four females more grateful or more delighted. Elinor not chuſing to put off her mourning, excuſed herſelf from being a witneſs to the

the ceremony, but entreated Sir Gervas to let Rachel ſpend that whole day at the farm, to which he conſented, to the great joy of that faithful domeſtic, who had not had a holiday for many years.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

MAY-DAY.

RACHEL got up very early, and left every thing ready for Jenkins, who, though he wiſhed very much to be at the farm alſo, yet appeared cheerful and contented, as he knew it was impoſſible for them to be both out together. He cooked the dinner very nicely, bacon and eggs and aſparagus, and had the ſatisfaction to be praiſed by his maſter.

Elinor, when her uncle was aſleep, went up to her cloſet, from the window

dow of which ſhe could plainly diſtinguiſh the may-pole and the merry throng dancing around it. A ballad lay upon the harpſichord that ſhe had taken great pains to teach Roſe and Betſey, who had very pleaſing voices, and they had taught it to Philip, who was reckoned one of the beſt ſingers in the county. Elinor had heard them rehearſe it ſeveral times at the farm, previous to this great day, accompanying them with her guitar, which Roſe was happy to carry over for the purpoſe; thus they were enabled to ſing it true. Elinor had found it in the box—both the muſic and words were in manuſcript; and ſhe thought nothing could be more applicable for the day, and arranged it for them in the following manner:

THE

THE FIRST OF MAY.

A BALLAD.

PHILIP.

How lovely is Nature! how blythſome and gay!
She throws off her ruſſets to welcome the May;
Her head with a chaplet of bloſſoms is crown'd,
That, fan'd by the zephyrs, ſhed odours around.

CHORUS.

Let us ſing, and dance and play;
Welcome, love-inſpiring May!

ROSE.

The ſweet-ſcented hawthorn ſhe wears at her breaſt,
And garlands of flowers adorn her green veſt;
Like gems o'er their foliage hang bright drops of dew,
As brilliant their luſtre, as varied their hue.

CHORUS.

Let us ſing, &c. &c.

BETSEY.

BETSEY.

The birds taught by Nature wild melody ſing:
Hark! hark! how they hail the fair daughter of Spring;
Harmonious their notes, while they ſing unconfin'd,
Free ſongſters of air, not the ſlaves of mankind.

CHORUS.

Let us ſing, &c. &c.

PHILIP.

Unmix'd are the pleaſures we villagers ſhare;
Our toil is rewarded by ſmiles from the fair.
At eve, when around us they merrily throng,
To hear the ſoft tale or the love-breathing ſong.

CHORUS.

Let us ſing, &c. &c.

TRIO.

By avarice and pride let the great ones be led;
Affection unites us whene'er we wed.
From Nature's pure dictates we ſcorn to depart;
True love and content bleſſes each humble heart.

CHORUS.

Let us ſing, &c. &c.

THE day was remarkably ſerene and clear. Elinor liſtened attentively—ſhe heard the chorus—ſhe heard the loud applauſe—the joyous laugh. Her heart was formed by nature for gaiety; ſhe longed to be amongſt them, but her eyes glanced over her black dreſs, and were inſtantly filled with tears. She quitted the cloſet, put on her bonnet, and turning from the ſcene of rural merriment, walked towards the ſea: but the ſun ſhone ſo hot upon the ſand, that ſhe entered a thick grove to the left of the Priory and wandered a conſiderable way, admiring the ſplendid beauty of the ocean, that gently roll'd its glittering waves over the ſand, while the buſy votaries of commerce were ſailing

in

in peace and ſafety upon its rimpled boſom. From this pleaſing proſpect, her eyes were attracted by a little groupe at ſome diſtance, that aſtoniſhed her greatly, as they appeared truly celeſtial. Their light robes were white as ſnow; their beautiful ringlets were wreathed with the moſt delicate flowers, and their little feet, that were bare, ſcarcely touched the graſs, as they danced hand in hand around a ſmall may-pole gaily adorned with garlands. Elinor gazed on them with wonder—ſhe almoſt believed them to be fairies, as ſhe could not think that ſix children would be in ſuch a remote ſpot without an attendant. She advanced without being obſerved by them and ſtood concealed behind a tree, while the four biggeſt of the groupe ſung with voices in perfect uniſon the following little madrigal.

Sportive

Sportive elfins blyth and gay,
Far from barren ſands we play,
And in ozier baſkets bring
All the faireſt buds of ſpring.
With theſe our may-pole we entwine
And then in fairy circlet join,
To hail with ſongs the firſt of May,
And dear Maria's natal day.

Lightly, lightly let us tread,
Nor cruſh the humble violet's head,
Nor primroſe pale, nor cowſlip ſweet,
That ſpring beneath our little feet.
So ſhall ſoft breezes wave our hair,
And gently kiſs the flow'rets there,
While thus adorn'd we hail the May
And dear Maria's natal day.

Smiling ſiſter, fairy queen,
Shall we dance upon the green?
Shall the tuneful ſong prevail;
Or the intereſting tale?
Let not thus thy laughing eye
Follow yon gay butterfly,
Maria, queen of blooming May,
Thou muſt rule our ſports to day.

The lovely Maria, the youngeſt but one in the groupe, ſaid in anſwer to the ſong:

"Then, let us all ſit down upon the graſs, by our pretty may-pole, and do you, my dear brother William, tell the ſtory of Prince Calaf who was ſo good to his papa and mama."

Elinor now ſtept forward and ſaid:

"Tell me, my charming little creatures, where do you come from? to whom do you belong?"

William the biggeſt boy looked earneſtly in her face, with a pair of fine penetrating black eyes, and ſaid gravely:

"Who

"Who are you? I do not know you —I never ſaw you in our grove before —tell me who you are?"

"My name is Clifford—I live at the Priory."

The children looked terrified a nd ſurrounded their may-pole, while the eldeſt girl ſaid very humbly,

"If your are Sir Gervas Clifford of the Priory, pray do not be angry, and take us away for playing in the grove. Nor do not take our pretty may-pole from us. Pray, do give us leave to go home and take it along with us. It has not made a large hole in the ground, indeed! pray let us take it away, and ſet it in our own garden."

"I am not Sir Gervas, my ſweet love, he is my uncle, and if he were

here, he would not be angry, nor take either yourſelves or your pretty may-pole away—he would like to ſee you play."

William replied indignantly:

"No, he would not. He did not like to ſee our pretty ſheep play here. He ſaid if papa did not ſell them, he would take them away—ſo our pretty ſheep were ſold—and he will not give our poor cow leave to walk about and eat the graſs, becauſe he ſays her feet make holes in the ground. So, poor thing! ſhe has only but a very little place to ſtay in, and ſhe looks over the hedge and moos ſo mournfully! for, ſhe wiſhes to go further and ſhe would be ſure, to come back to her home and give us all milk, ſhe is ſo very good!"

Elinor,

Elinor, bluſhing at her uncle's rigidneſs, aſked:

"What is your papa's name, my ſweet boy?"

"There it is, on that bit of a letter."

The addreſs was: "The Rev. William Conway, Grove Houſe, near Clifford Priory."

"Will you introduce me to your papa and mama?"

"Yes, when they come: we expect them here preſently."

"And are you all brothers and ſiſters, my pretty ones?"

"Yes, we are ſix, three ſiſters and three brothers—this is Sophia, this Jane,

and this Maria, 'tis *her* birth-day—this is Frederick—this little Henry—and I am William."

"How old are you, William?"

"I was eight laſt January, and our youngeſt, little Henry, will be two next June—Oh! I ſee papa and mama, through the trees: let us run and meet them."

Away flew the four eldeſt, and Elinor followed, leading Maria and Henry. Mr. and Mrs. Conway poſſeſſed that ſomething which charms more than beauty. The ſmiles of affection animated their faces, at the ſight of their children, and, for a moment, Elinor's heart glowed with rapture, at the bleſſing of parental love, till recalling the days that were paſt, it was chilled by affliction, and letting go Maria's hand, ſhe

ſhe haſtily covered her face to conceal the tears that her too keen ſenſibility had excited.

Mr. and Mrs. Conway were ſurpriſed, at ſeeing a ſtranger with their children, but much more ſo at her ſorrow. Yet, with the delicacy ever attendant on good ſenſe, they drew their little ones towards the may-pole and gave her time to recover her ſpirits, without ſeeming to obſerve her, while the late playful groupe diſcovered the gentleſt ſympathy by the gravity of their looks and their ſlow pace. The little Henry ſtill ſtood quietly by her and hugging her hand to his boſom, looked tenderly up in her face, the tears ſwelling in his beautiful black eyes. Elinor was ſorry ſhe had caſt a gloom over perfect happineſs, and, taking the lovely infant in her arms, fondly returned his careſſes, and going up to Mrs. Conway, ſaid:

"Forgive me, my dear Madam, but I have juſt loſt a beloved father, and my heart weakened by the recent wound, is overcome even by the emotion of pleaſure."

Mrs. Conway, who had been informed by her ſon who Elinor was, ſaid:

"Mr. Conway and myſelf ſhall think ourſelves happy if you Miſs Clifford will let us endeavour to ſoothe a grief that time only can remove. Condeſcend to walk with us to our cottage—change of ſcene will be, at leaſt, a temporary relief."

"You are very kind—I did not know I was ſo happy as to have ſuch agreeable neighbours—my uncle never told me."

"Sir

"Sir Gervas hardly knows us, I believe; he ſecludes himſelf from ſociety, and we, happy in ourſelves, have no inclination to intrude upon others."

"I am afraid *I* ſhall intrude upon you too often, if you give me encouragement—I do not wiſh to return to the great world, crowds have no charms for me, but I muſt own ſociety has. Friendſhip is the balm of life, and there are ſome people to whom the heart attaches itſelf at firſt ſight. I ſpeak feelingly, and I hope my uncle, for my ſake, will give a general invitation to Mr. and Mrs Conway and their lovely family, whoſe preſence will enliven our gloomy Priory."

"We have received no marks of favor, as yet, from Sir Gervas—he has oppreſſed us ſeverely."

"From want of conſideration, I hope, not cruelty. I am ſure my uncle has a good heart. Do me the favor to place a confidence in me, and I will endeavour to redreſs every injury you have ſuſtained from my uncle's inattention. I ſuppoſe Mr. Conway is the rector of our pariſh?"

"No, madam; only the curate. Sir Gervas Clifford is the rector himſelf."

"Your ſurpriſe me! I did not know my uncle was in orders."

"It ſeems Sir Gervas ſtudied divinity in his younger days, and had taken his degrees. This living being in his own gift, when the incumbent died, Sir Gervas was ordained, and, for near thirty years, has preſerved the emoluments of it and kept a curate at thirty pounds a year, to take all the trouble off his

hands, in which capacity Mr. Conway has for ſix years performed his duty to the ſatisfaction of the pariſhioners, though he had the misfortune to diſoblige Sir Gervas, I fear irrecoverably, by repreſenting the deplorable ſtate of the church which is daily falling into ruins and unſafe for his tenants to enter on a windy day."

"And how could that poſſibly diſoblige my uncle?"

"Becauſe he did not chuſe to be at any expence for the repairing of it—no entreaties could prevail—he ſaid if the people were afraid to go to the pariſh church, they might ſay their prayers in the Priory chapel. But they ſeem to have greater fears of entering that, as moſt of them run by it, even at day time, from a fooliſh ſuppoſition of its being haunted."

"It is not *haunted*, I believe, but it appears to be in a very ruinous ſtate. The church muſt be bad indeed, if it is worſe than the chapel. Do you know, my dear madam, what the living is worth?"

"Upwards of five hundred a year."

"And Mr. Conway have no more than thirty! my God! is it poſſible! and ſo large an eſtate too, cruel uncle! How ſtrange that an inordinate love of riches ſhould harden his heart, in every other reſpect kind and affectionate."

A ſtile intercepting their way, Mr. Conway, who had walked on with ſome of his children, ſtopped to aſſiſt the ladies, and ſeeing that Elinor was recovered from the grief he had at firſt ſeen her in, joined in the converſation, but immediately

mediately changed the ſubject and proved himſelf both ſenſible and entertaining.

Elinor had never beheld ſuch an intereſting ſcene of domeſtic felicity. William went firſt, bearing the may-pole in triumph followed by the three girls and Frederick, each carrying a ſmall ozier baſket. They played as they went along—but their play, though wildly frolickſome, was neither rude nor noiſy. Mr. Conway carried Henry, who repaid him by decorating his hat with ſome flowers that remained in the baſket, and by giving him many ſweet kiſſes, nor did Elinor think the gentleman and the ſcholar diſgraced by this indulgence of paternal tenderneſs. Mrs. Conway, whoſe appearance promiſed him a ſeventh pledge of love, hung upon his right arm. She was very pretty and delicate, and appeared hardly old enough to be the mother of ſo many. Her dreſs

dreſs was a robe of muſlin, not fine, but extremely white, and a ſmall ſtraw hat without any ornament: The two eldeſt boys had veſts and pantaloons of white calico—the girls and Henry gowns of the ſame—Elinor ſaid:

"Are you not afraid thoſe dear children ſhould hurt their feet by being without ſhoes and ſtockings?"

"They have never, thank God! received any accident. Nature ſpreads a ſoft carpet for the bare footed cottagers. The hard pavement and dirt of towns require ſhoes—my children never ſaw a ſtreet, and Mrs. Conway is particularly partial to light clothing for them, becauſe ſhe thinks, and I believe with great truth, that the wraps of faſhion in great cities, without which the children are never ſuffered to take a walk, are more prejudicial to their health than the

the want of free and pure air, as the confinement and encumbrance of thoſe wraps oppreſs the poor little creatures, and impede their activity which gives the animating glow of health and keeps their blood in proper circulation."

"I ſaw enough to diſguſt me againſt wrapping up children at Yarmouth, whither I went laſt winter to ſee a family who were juſt come from London. To my great ſurpriſe, two little girls and a boy, not yet in breeches, were each clothed in worſted ſtockings, half boots, three petticoats, a frock, a muſlin tippet with a deep plaited frill, a cloth great coat, with two tucks, edged with fur, as was a leather cap beneath which peeped a deplorable froſt nipped face that ſeemeed to ſtand in need of a maſk *lined* with fur. Added to all theſe, was

was a fox-ſkin tippet tied behind and hanging down like two long tails, worſted gloves, and a muff faſtened round the waiſt for fear it ſhould be loſt. The poor things were juſt returned from a walk, and, after creeping along, under the weight of their heavy habiliments for an hour, came in trembling with cold and were forced to have their hands and feet rubbed by a great fire, to give circulation to their almoſt congealed blood —while mine and other little villagers fly about on the ſevereſt days in winter, and enjoying exerciſe never feel the cold — they delight in ſnow, and will run round the garden when it is up to their knees, yet their ſkin never chaps, nor do they know what a chilblain is."

Mr.

Mr. Conway ſaid ſmiling:

"It is well for me that children do not abſolutely ſtand in need of ſuch a Ruſſian garb; my income would ſcarcely buy caps and tippets for them."

"What a terrible metamorphoſe it would be, Mr. Conway, to ſee ſo many angels, for ſuch they look now, transformed into little ſhaggy bears, crawling about, as if they were half ſtarved with cold and hunger? I, who was accuſtomed to the light eaſy dreſſes worn by the children in Bengal, thought the infants here were all cripples, when I ſaw them ſit a dead weight upon their nurſes arms, not conſidering that the weight was in the clothing not the children, who,

who, when they are ſo bundled up *muſt* ſit all of a heap, and get the rickets, becauſe the nurſes cannot dance them and their incumbrances."

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

GROVE-HOUSE.

THEIR arrival at the houſe put an end to the diſſertation on the dreſs of infants. Elinor was moſt ſincerely welcomed by its amiable inhabitants—the houſe was low and built in the cottage ſtyle, with caſements. It ſtood in the midſt of a large well-cultivated garden. The apartments were fitted up with frugality, neatneſs, and taſte. The largeſt parlor was covered with green cloth, the window curtains were dimity, with a drapery of the ſame fringed. The walls

walls were ſtucco coloured of light grey and bordered with roſes and myrtle. The fringe was made by Mrs. Conway—the border round the room and chairs to match were painted by her and her elder children. Delft vaſes, concealed in paſteboard caſes, that were alſo prettily painted, ſtood upon the chimney-piece, full of the various beauties of the ſpring, culled from both the garden and the field. A piano-forte, violin-cello, and two violins were in the room, and the number of muſic books that lay upon and under the piano-forte ſhowed plainly that the inſtruments were not uſeleſs. The delighted Elinor ſaid:

"Your are muſicians, I ſee: how happy ſhall I be to make one in your little concerts."

"My

"My muſic is all very old, Miſs Clifford—What my father bought for me before I was married."

"Then, I am ſo happy as to be able to lend you all the beſt that has been publiſhed ſince—*Now*, I can account for the ſweet correct voices I heard in the grove ſinging a charming madrigal, in honor of the firſt of May and a ſiſter's birth-day."

"Oh! our fairies ſong? their father compoſed the words, and I the muſic, as a reward for the attention they pay to our inſtructions. They are all muſicians; even little Henry has made a beginning."

"How you *enjoy* life! You realize the beautiful picture of connubial love at the end of Thomſon's Spring."

"Mrs.

"Mrs. Conway and I married with that picture in our view. We have indeed realized it, in mutual affection for each other and for our offspring; and we look forward to that bliſsful period, which terminates all worldly happineſs, and endeavour to obtain eternal felicity, not by gloomy auſterity, but by a cheerful enjoyment of the bleſſings the Almighty has beſtowed upon us for which I hope we are truly grateful. The education our parents gave us, has been far above our fortunes: yet, as we have derived from that our greateſt comfort and entertainment, we take pains to embelliſh the minds of our children, at the ſame time that we inſtruct them in every thing that is uſeful. My boys ſhall underſtand gardening and farming, in all their branches, and Maria will take equal care that the girls are inſtructed in the management of a dairy, and every domeſtic female employment. To aſſiſt

us

us in this taſk, we are happy in having two excellent ſervants in a man and his wife, who having met with misfortunes, were glad to find a quiet aſylum, requiring little more than their maintenance which they earn by fidelity and induſtry, and we do all we can to ſoften the toil of ſervitude, by good humour, and aſſiſting ourſelves as much as poſſible."

"Oh! Mr. Conway! you are a richer man than my uncle! *richer* indeed!—you are bleſt with a wife and children. He loſt his, many years ago; yet, weeps for them to this day. Great misfortunes ſometime impair the reaſon—may they not have had a ſtrange effect upon my poor uncle's diſpoſition? Do not blame him, ſir: he has had much trouble, and, by ſhutting himſelf from ſociety, he ſeems, in a great meaſure, to have excluded the ſocial virtues from his heart as well as comfort and amuſement.

Per-

Perhaps, in time, I may be ſo happy as to give another turn to his ideas. Indeed, I do not wiſh him to be ſaving upon my account. I ſhall have enough, if I ſurvive him, though *I* muſt be under the neceſſity of parting with the rectory to ſome worthy Divine or other. I had never heard that Sir Gervas was a clergyman, and was very much ſurpriſed when he buried my father. I really thought he read the ſervice himſelf to ſave expence. I did not wonder at his reading prayers and a ſermon every ſunday, as he is too infirm to walk far, and the chapel is convenient for him."

"I never was in the chapel, nor have I ſeen more of the Priory than the hall and and library, where I believe Sir Gervas generally ſits—it ſeems an immenſe building."

"It is, ſir, a great uſeleſs place, the diſmal abode of only four people, when, I ſuppoſe, near a hundred might live in it without incommoding each other. I have not ſeen the uninhabited apartments yet; for, the domeſtics are ſo very fearful, that they dare not venture to go into them, even by day light, and my uncle, though a ſtranger to fear, puts me off, till the weather is warmer and he is better able to walk about. I ought to be aſhamed for ſaying that I am myſelf too great a coward, to wander about the Priory alone; but ſo it is in reality: for, though I am certainly above being influenced by the idle fancies of the ignorant, yet if, while I was in one of the deſolated rooms, a rat was to leap out from behind the old hangings, it would terrify me, I believe, as much as a ſpectre. But I am talking away the time, and, if my uncle ſhould awaken, he will wonder what is become of

me; for, I never ſtray beyond the garden without his knowledge. He knows I ſhall not go to Milbrook farm to-day, as my dreſs does not ſuit bridal feſtivity; for which reaſon I moſt fortunately took the path which has led me to the bliſsful abode of content and harmony."

"Mrs. Conway and I ſhall think it an honor and pleaſure, if you will indulge us frequently with a viſit. Do not, Miſs Clifford, wait for Sir Gervas giving us an invitation. I know him well, and am ſure he will not."

"It mortifies me extremely to hear you ſay ſo. But, my dear ſir and madam, will you grant me a very great favor? Will you permit your lovely Maria to be my gueſt for a day or two? I think my uncle will be greatly attached to her. He loſt a girl juſt of her age, whom he continually laments.

If

If I find that the ſight of Maria afflicts inſtead of pleaſes him, or that the dear little creature is uneaſy at the Priory, I will return her to you immediately: but I flatter myſelf that ſhe will intereſt Sir Gervas, not only for herſelf, but for her family. I will be in the grove to-morrow, about the ſame time I was to-day, and will take her home with me, if you will give me leave."

"Your propoſal, Miſs Clifford, does us honor: we will reſign her to your care with pleaſure," replied Mr. Conway.

The tender mother bowed aſſent, but Elinor ſaw that ſhe was not quite happy at the thought of parting with one of her children, though but for a ſhort period. Mr. Conway and his three eldeſt children walked with Elinor to the Priory gate. She found Sir Gervas in the garden, very uneaſy at her abſence, and too

pettiſh for her to ſay any thing about the Conways. Even the abſence of Rachel was a great trouble to him, though he did not want her, and, long before duſk, he wiſhed for her to come home. Elinor did all in her power to amuſe him, but he was not in a humour to be amuſed—he was contradictory and peeviſh—he found fault with the ſupper and ordered it to be taken away, before Elinor had half done, he then grew ſtill more ſplenetic at, what he called, Rachel's impertinence, in ſtaying out ſo late, when ſhe knew his hours.

At laſt, the old Dame arrived full of glee: but her mirth was checked and the pleaſure of the day imbittered by her maſter's anger, which was quite unexpected. He would not let her ſpeak but ordered her to go to bed directly, upon which Elinor wiſhed him a good night

night and retired, Rachel following not at all pleaſed at being treated with ſo much ſeverity, when ſhe had pleaſed herſelf with the thoughts of entertaining his honor's worſhip with a full and particular account of the day.

Elinor ſaw and pitied Rachel's diſappointment, and kindly endeavoured to make her amends by deſiring that ſhe would give her an account of the amuſements at the farm. Rachel was overjoyed at the requeſt, and, ſitting down in the chamber, gave Elinor ſuch a tedious circumſtantial hiſtory of the day, that the great clock ſtruck twelve before ſhe had finiſhed. Poor Rachel ſtarted up terrified out of her wits, to think how ſhe ſhould get back to her own chamber, and ſtill more alarmed at the idea of ſtaying where ſhe was, trembling and pale, ſhe ſaid:

"Oh! mercy, mercy how do I be to go down agen—how fooliſh I do ha beend—Lord help me—I do wiſh that ſo be Roger did be here too—but alack a day he do be goned to bed long ago."

"Do not be frightened Rachel, I will ſtand on the ſtairs and talk to you as you go down. Remember you leave me here by myſelf."

"Ah! Lord love you! ſo I does, indeed—and if ſo be as how you know'd but *all*—Lack-a-day! well! well! I muſt unt ſay any thing. I do be forced to hold my tongue—or elſe ſo be his honor's worſhip oud be ſo angry. Well. God bleſs and preſerve you, my dear Lady! good night! I muſt get down as faſt as I can ſome how or ſome how! heaven grant that ſo be I may get ſafe and not ſee nothing by the way."

The

The good-natured Elinor went with her to the great hall, acroſs which Rachel ran as faſt as ſhe was able—and Elinor would have returned to her chamber with more than her accuſtomed ſwiftneſs, only ſhe fear'd her lamp would be extinguiſhed by too quick a motion. The myſterious *all* that ſhe was forbidden to know, and which ſhe had not thought of for ſome time, now threw an awful gloom over her mind, and ſhe lay awake till day-light, perplexing herſelf with confuſed and diſmal ideas.

CHAP. XIII.

THE LITTLE VISITOR.

THE next day Elinor longed for the hour when ſhe was to meet Maria, as ſhe was ſure her uncle would be delighted with ſuch a charming child. She ſet out the minute he went to ſleep, and ſoon met the man with Maria, whom her parents had ſent in this manner, leſt ſhe ſhould have ſome regrets at parting from them, or her brothers and ſiſters. The faithful domeſtic carried her to the Priory gate, and the little creature was very well pleaſed at being left

left with Elinor, to whom she had fondly attached herself the day before, and who now took her into the most cheerful parts of the garden, made her feed the gold fishes, with which she was greatly delighted, as she had never seen any before. Elinor then shewed her all the pretty things in the closet—played and sung the most lively airs, and encouraged her to display the progress she had made in music and singing, which was astonishing for her years. Elinor then made her familiar with the portraits, and was pleased to find that she seemed to have no fears about them. In short Elinor took care to avoid every place and thing likely to impress terror on the mind of her little visitor, whom she even prepared to love Sir Gervas and described his dress, lest the oddness of it should frighten her, or make her laugh; and Elinor wished him to give her a favorable reception, and

ſaid all that ſhe thought was moſt likely to intereſt her young heart for him that ſhe might meet *him* affectionately, and ſhe was ſo ſucceſsful that the child longed for him to awaken, and rejoiced when ſhe ſaw him walking in the garden, which was his uſual cuſtom after his nap. They went down directly, and Maria ran to him with affectionate familiarity and ſaid:

"I am come to love and kiſs you, good ſir, if you will let me, and I will be your own dear little girl."

Sir Gervas did not ſpeak but gazed on the child with ſuch emotion, that Elinor, alarmed at what ſhe had done, tremblingly aſſiſted him to the neareſt arbor, without being able to ſay a word. The child, who had ran in before them, was ſeated on the bench, and Sir Gervas exclaimed.

"Ah!

"Ah! what! is the viſion *here* too? Elinor, I am not well—my head is diſordered—my ſenſes are leaving me. I dream, child—I dream! help me to my apartment."

"My dear uncle, you do *not* dream—you ſee a reality—it is no viſion—it is a living child."

"Impoſſible! impoſſible! no—no, no, I have not any belief in magic. It cannot be herſelf—no—but I will be convinced—yes, I will be convinced—lead me to my ſtudy—and then leave me—ſee, ſee how it flies before me, ſweet angel! it muſt be—no, no it cannot—what art could give *animation* to—leave me."

"Dear ſir, let me go in with you—you ſeem diſordered."

"No matter—no matter—away inſtantly, you muſt not come in with me."

Sir Gervas puſhed Elinor away from the door—ſhe heard him double lock it. Maria ſaid:

"The gentleman will not love us, he has turned us out of the room—is he angry? What have we done to make him angry? Don't cry, Lady, if he wont forgive us we will go home to my papa and mama—they are good-natured."

Elinor was extremely concerned to ſee the ſtrange effect the ſight of the child had upon her uncle, and wiſhed moſt ſincerely that ſhe had not ſurpriſed him. His incoherency, and his locking himſelf in alarmed her greatly, and ſhe ſtood anxiouſly waiting at the door, which in a ſhort time he opened, apparently more

more compoſed than he was before. Yet, ſtill fixing his eyes upon the child, he ſaid:

"Elinor have you got a child in your hand? or have I really loſt my ſenſes?"

"My dear uncle, I have Maria Conway in my hand, I am very ſorry to ſee you are ſo diſcompoſed at the ſight of her; Mr. and Mrs. Conway has given me leave to have here for a few days, if it will not be diſagreeable to you."

"It is diſagreeable—*very* diſagreeable—I wonder how you could dare to bring her here, without aſking my conſent. I will not have children brought to the Priory. I cannot bear to ſee them, the ſight diſtracts me—ſend her away—ſend her away—ſhe makes me unhappy."

Sir Gervas put one hand over his eyes—Maria took the other, and kiſsing it tenderly, ſaid:

"No, indeed! I will not make you unhappy, poor ſir. I will love you dearly and play with you. I will never vex you, nor make you angry—Maria knows better."

"Inconſiderate Elinor! did you bring this little girl to break my heart?"

"Oh, no, my dear ſir—to amuſe you. I flattered myſelf that you would be delighted with her innocent prattle."

"Delighted! is ſhe mine? is ſhe the child of my Lydia?—no, no, no, cruel girl, you have awakened a father's pangs in my boſom—you have brought *Conway's* child to me—but can never—never reſtore

reſtore my *own!* ſend her back, ſend her back immediately."

"Pray, ſir, give me leave to keep her here to night—only this *one* night; and to-morrow, I will take her back myſelf, if you do not chuſe to let her ſtay with me a few days."

"For what? for what? why am I to be incumbered with children? and why do you go about making acquaintance with people who are unknown even to me? I will not have you do ſo Elinor—though the man is my curate, I am not obliged to keep one of his children, am I? It is enough that I maintain *you*—which I do becauſe you are my niece—but what have I to do with ſtrangers, Elinor? go, go, you are a fooliſh unthinking girl, and I am very ſorry to ſee it."

Maria

Maria finding that the great chair would hold her as well as Sir Gervas, had placed herſelf by him and was greatly entertained with looking at the paintings on the ſcreen which ſtood by her ſide. Poor Elinor was ſo diſconcerted at having her agreeable ſcheme ſo unexpectedly fruſtrated, that ſhe ſtood ſilent and motionleſs before her uncle, when Rachel came in to aſk what he would chuſe for ſupper; but the minute ſhe ſaw the child, whom ſhe had not ſeen before, inſtead of ſpeaking ſhe ſhrieked violently and ran out of the room much faſter than ſhe came into it, and had like to have thrown down Jenkins, whom her ſcream had brought from the kitchen. He, imagining ſomething had happened to Sir Gervas, went haſtily into the ſtudy, which he had no ſooner entered than he exclaimed:

"Mercy

"Mercy upon us! heaven defend us! what do I ſee? If it be unt comed here in the day time—Lord protect us!"

"What ails the fool? what is come, you old ſimpleton? *What* is come? hold—take care what you ſay—do not make me angry, Roger."

"Why look there your honor do'unt you ſee it do be ſitting a ſide you, and yet you do unt be frighted not a bit at un."

"What am I to be frightened at, you blockhead? Parſon Conway's little girl?"

"Parſon Conway's, your honor! Lord! Lord! I did be ſure that ſo be it did ha beed——"

"*Roger.*"

"*Roger.*"

"Yes your worſhip—yes—I ont ſay nothing—no, not another word about it afore her dear Ladyſhip—no—no, that I ont—only ſo be I did be ſo ſurpriſed, your honor—ſeeing I did unt know'd at all that ſo be parſon Conway's child did be comed to our Pliry."

"Carry her home, Roger—carry her home—I do not want to have her here—no, no, ſhe muſt not ſtay."

"Why, your worſhip, ſhe do be a mortal deal better than——"

"Get out of the room, Roger—and do you, Elinor Clifford, go up into yours, and let me ſee no more of you till to-morrow. Take the child away with you, and never let me ſee her again, if you regard my happineſs."

Maria

Maria got down out of his chair, and, looking at him with tearful eyes, ſaid, her pretty lips trembling while ſhe ſpoke:

"This good Miſs Clifford ſhall come home with me and live in papa's houſe. He will not turn her out of the room, becauſe he is not angry and ill-natured like you. He loves every body when they are good. You are a very croſs papa —I won't live with you."

"Poor little dear! don't cry, I will not be croſs to you. No, no, you did not bring yourſelf here—I am not angry with you, pretty child."

"I am very glad of that—then will you kiſs me, before I go away, ſir, and ſay 'good by Maria! God bleſs you!' will you ſir?"

"Why,

"Why, yes, I believe I *muſt*—as you aſk me ſo prettily—but firſt, pray, tell me how old you are."

"I was juſt four years old, ſir, yeſterday—May-day is always my birth-day."

"Four years! born on May-day too! ſtrange! ſtrange! the age—the day—Oh! memory! *memory!* it appears but *yeſterday* to me—well! well! well! Roger, do not you remember when my little Elinor was crowned queen of May? the laſt—the *laſt* ſhe ever ſaw."

"Ah! lack-a-day! yes, your honor, I do well remember it. Bleſs her dear heart! how beautifully ſhe did look, your worſhip! and this do look as fair and as pretty."

"Almoſt,

"Almoſt, Roger — almoſt, I think ſhe does—Well! well! I will not turn her away to night. No—no—to night Elinor you may keep your little viſitor. You ſay you brought her here to amuſe me—very likely you did. I forgive you, my child — and now, little maid, I will do as you bid me and ſay: 'good by Maria, God bleſs you!' we will only part till ſupper time."

Maria once more got up into the chair, and, putting her arms around his neck, ſaid:

"Now you are a dear good-natured papa, and I love you with all my heart, and I will play with you — and ſing to you, if you will give me leave."

"Will

"Will you, my pretty may-flower? then ſo you ſhall—you may ſit down by me, and talk and ſing till ſupper is ready."

Elinor rejoicing in the change of her uncle's humour, left Maria with him, while ſhe fetched her guitar and ſome little airs Maria had brought with her, that ſhe could ſing perfectly. Elinor accompanied her and ſhe ſung them with ſo ſweet a voice, and ſo much expreſſion, that Sir Gervas was delighted with her and promiſed to hear her play on the harpſichord the next day. The now happy Elinor did all ſhe could to render Maria intereſting and agreeable to Sir Gervas, and the engaging little creature gratified her wiſhes, by being extremely lively and entertaining. Never had a meal been ſo cheerful, to Elinor, ſince ſhe arrived at

the

the Priory. Sir Gervas ſat up much beyond his uſual time, and, when they ſeparated, it was with great gaiety and good humour.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

ADVENTURES OF THE NIGHT.

MARIA went dancing and ſinging into the chamber that had ever ſtruck the mind of Elinor with dread. The playful child had no fears to caſt a gloom over *her* ſpirits, and ſhe imparted a large ſhare of her livelineſs to her companion, to whom the preſence of this infant gave more courage and vivacity than ſhe had felt ſince her days of happineſs in Portman-ſquare.

After

After they had been in bed for ſome hours, Maria awakened and complained of being very thirſty: Elinor got up to give her a little water, but was very much diſappointed at finding the pitcher empty. The thought of going down ſtairs to fetch ſome was extremely diſagreeable: yet, her compaſſion would not either let her ring for Rachel, or let the poor child lie without drink till day-light—ſhe wiſhed to take Maria with her, yet dreaded leſt the cold midnight air ſhould injure the little creature's health, ifſhe was to take her out of the warm bed and go down ſtairs to the kitchen. Elinor, therefore, ſummoning all her reſolution to her aid, ſlipped on her morning-gown, took up her lamp and ſaid to Maria:

"Do not cry, my ſweeteſt child, I am going to fetch you ſomething to drink—I muſt leave you in the dark for a very

little while — I ſhall return to you preſently."

"Oh! I don't mind being in the dark: but, indeed, I am very *very* dry—make haſte back to me with ſome water—my dear, *dear* good Miſs Clifford—"

Elinor aſſuring her that ſhe would, left the room.—As ſhe went down ſtairs, a ſudden ſhower of hail clattered againſt the caſements of the gothic hall, and a guſt of wind came howling through them that nearly extinguiſhed her lamp. When ſhe came to the kitchen, ſhe could not find any water there, and was obliged to go into an out-houſe, at a little diſtance from it, to a pump. The lamp which ſhe with much difficulty kept in as ſhe went along, was quite extinguiſhed as ſhe returned. She eaſily found the kitchen, and feeling her way to the chimney, hoped

to

to find ſome ſparks of fire remaining in the wood-aſhes, which ſhe might enliven ſufficiently to light her lamp; but to her great mortification they were cold. She knew not in what part of that immenſe kitchen Rachel kept her tinder—therefore it was in vain to ſearch—ſhe would have ſat down and waited there for day-light, rather than have ventured back to her chamber in the dark; only ſhe feared that her poor little gueſt would be terrified at being left ſo long alone, and perhaps fret herſelf into a fever. This thought determined her to proceed as cautiouſly as poſſible, that ſhe might not loſe herſelf in the great hall, for that was the place ſhe moſt dreaded; ſhe left her now uſeleſs lamp in the kitchen, and kept one hand upon the wall, by which means ſhe knew ſhe would be able to grope her way to the ſtair-caſe. She went on carefully and calmly till ſhe laid hold of a man's coat: alarmed to a degree, ſhe

ſtarted from it; but ſoon recollected that her uncle's hat and cloak hung up by the garden-door to be ready for him. Vexed with herſelf for being ſo fooliſhly frightened, ſhe now wiſhed to find once more the object of her late terror, but, after wandering about for a conſiderable time, ſhe could neither find that nor the ſtaircaſe. She knew this hall had many doors which led to various parts of the Priory, and trembled leſt ſhe ſhould get into ſome of the uninhabited apartments; till ſhe remembered Rachel once ſaid they were all locked. Encouraged by this idea, ſhe went on, and at laſt found a door that gave way to a ſlight touch, which ſhe concluded was that at the foot of the great ſtairs, only the wind had blown it to, which it often did. She ſoon found the ſtairs, and, notwithſtanding the darkneſs, aſcended them with alacrity and opening her chamber door called Maria, whom ſhe found had fallen aſleep. Elinor would

not

not go to bed, till ſhe had felt if ſhe was covered up warm, and was ſurpriſed to find her face and hands quite cold—ſhe now thought the child was in a fit, from the terror of being left alone ſo long, and haſtened round to her own ſide with the pitcher, hoping, if ſhe went into the bed and rubbed Maria's hands, and warmed her in her own boſom, that ſhe would ſoon come to herſelf. But, when Elinor went to pull down the bed-clothes, ſhe found her place already occupied. A head lay upon the pillow, and a hand upon the ſheet—it was neither the head nor the hand of a *child*.—Though ſhe was at firſt greatly ſurpriſed, ſhe ſoon recollected that Rachel muſt have heard the child cry, and had, on finding her alone, gone to bed to quiet her, while ſhe had been wandering about in the dark. Certain of this, ſhe would not diſturb her, but make room for herſelf by Maria—

In paſſing the foot of the bed ſhe touched the curtains, and found that, inſtead of cloth, they were ſattin fringed with either gold or ſilver. Horror took poſſeſſion of Elinor's ſoul, but did not take away her ſenſes—the ſplendid chamber—the myſterious *ſomething*, that ſhe was not to know, ruſhed into her mind. She ſupported herſelf by the bed-poſt—and through the awful gloom of total darkneſs, fancied ſhe beheld the unburied bodies of Lady Clifford and her child lying on the bed, and recollecting what her uncle ſaid when he was ſpeaking of this chamber, exclaimed:

"There is *no* room indeed!"

Then ſtarting from the bed of death, ſhe caught her foot in the carpet, and fell to the ground with great force—ſtunned by the fall, and juſt fainting with terror, it was with difficulty that ſhe got up again—

again—and when ſhe did, after ſtaggering againſt many things, ſhe laid her hand upon a key, and not caring where ſhe went, ſo as ſhe could get out of that terrific chamber, ſhe unlocked the door, and, feeling about for ſtairs at every ſtep ſhe took, ſoon came to another door, which ſhe alſo unlocked.—Terror gave her ſtrength beyond what ſhe naturally poſſeſſed, or ſhe could not have accompliſhed ſo hard a taſk as the opening locks that were encruſted with the ruſt of many years.

Elinor had no ſooner opened the laſt door, than ſhe heard Maria crying ſadly. The ſound directed her to the bed—ſhe was rejoiced to find herſelf in her own room, though that ſhe ſhould be ſo, very much ſurprized her.

The poor little girl claſped her fondly round the neck and ſaid:

"Oh! how glad I am that you are come back—I thought you would never come again—what a long time you have ſtaid—and I am ſo very dry—pray, *pray* Miſs Clifford give ſome drink—"

Elinor had left the pitcher in the fatal chamber—ſhe ſhuddered with horror at the idea of returning to it—and *did* put off a little time by talking to the child, and telling her that, as the lamp went out, it was impoſſible to get her any water till day appeared; which it ſoon did, and as Maria cried without ceaſing, Elinor, at almoſt the firſt dawn, ventured once more to enter the room ſhe ſo much dreaded.—The faint light that gleamed through the dirty caſements was juſt ſtrong enough to diſcover to Elinor the objects ſhe moſt dreaded to behold—ſhe ſtood trembling in the middle of the chamber, not daring to approach the bed, when a deep groan iſſued from it—the drapery ſhook—and ſhe

ſhe plainly perceived the larger form ariſing from the pillow—ſhe flew back to her own apartment—ſhe kept her eyes fixed wildly upon the doors that ſhe could not ſhut—ſhe heard diſtinct ſlow ſteps advancing, and ſoon a figure in long white garments ſtood before her.—Elinor ſunk upon her knees, and lifted up her hands in a ſupplicating manner, but was unable to utter a ſyllable.—The ſpectre ſaid in an awful and angry voice:

"Elinor! Elinor! what right had you to open theſe doors, and enter that ſacred chamber? curious—preſumptuous girl!"

"Good God! who is it?—are you my uncle!—"

"Who ſhould I be? what didſt take me for a ghoſt again. Well! well! your curioſity deſerves to be puniſhed—I am

glad you are frightened—impertinent girl! what buſineſs had you to break open theſe doors and diſcover what I choſe ſhould remain ſecret?"

"Dear ſir, ſit down and hear me—I did *not* break open the doors—that behind you was ſo nicely fitted to the wainſcot, that I never knew till now it was a door—I opened it on the other ſide—"

"How! on the *other ſide*—how came you on the other ſide?"

"I will tell you, my deareſt uncle—"

Maria cried again for drink. Sir Gervas ſtarting up, exclaimed:

"Ah! what is that! what do I hear!—Oh! I remember, it is the little onway—what is ſhe crying for?"

Elinor

Elinor told her uncle, and gave him a ſhort account of her diſtreſſes and terrors. His anger ceaſed when he heard in what an undeſigning manner ſhe had got into Lady Clifford's chamber; and when ſhe had finiſhed her adventures of the night, he ſaid mildly:

"I am ſatisfied, Elinor—now come with me and fetch the water."

Elinor followed Sir Gervas, and endeavoured to ſuppreſs her fears—It was now quite light—he gave her the pitcher, and ſaid:

"When you have given the child ſome drink, come back to me, you ſhall ſee and know all now, before I lock theſe doors, which have never been opened ſince Lady Clifford died, till you opened them to night—go—and come back to me directly."

Elinor trembled — her hands could ſcarcely ſuſtain the pitcher. Poor Maria drank greedily of the dear-bought water, and Elinor returned to Sir Gervas, who was ſtanding by the bed. He ſaid:

"Come nearer, Elinor; theſe dear remains of my wife and child will not hurt you—do not be afraid—there lies my beautiful Lydia—here, her no leſs beautiful child, my little Elinor, who, ſhe begged, might not be buried till ſhe was.—Then did *I*, kneeling by this bed, ſolemnly ſwear, that neither of them ſhould be removed from this chamber to the chapel, till I could be interred along with them—nor *ſhall* they.—When I am dead—let the vault and the Priory chapel be repaired—let us be put cloſe together, and a ſuitable monument erected near the altar.—Help me, Elinor, to pull down this coverlid—do not be afraid—pull it down—"

Elinor

Elinor tremblingly aſked:

"Why ſir?"

"You ſhall ſee—there is nothing to frighten you, child—the forms you now gaze on are only wax.—Within theſe coffins are concealed the real bodies of Lydia and Elinor."

Two crimſon velvet coffins with ſilver plates ſtood upon a mattraſs of white ſattin, flounced, and fringed with ſilver. Bolſters to correſpond, filled up the vacuities between the coffins, and ſupported the heads of the effigies that lay upon them, whoſe robes were alſo of white ſattin richly ornamented with fine lace. Sir Gervas ſaid:

"Elinor, let theſe beloved reſemblances be kept in a glaſs-caſe, lying down like

like the duke of Buckingham, in Weſtminſter Abbey—my lovely child muſt lie by the ſide of her angelic mother.—Let it ſtand near the entrance of the vault, which will then contain *their* remains and your poor uncle's."

Elinor's terror had given way to grief: ſhe ſtood ſilently weeping the untimely fate of thoſe ſo dear to her uncle. She wept alſo for him who had ſo long ſurvived them—ſhe helped him gently to replace the coverlid; and, ſeeing him ſtand thoughtful and melancholy, gave him time to recover himſelf, while ſhe examined the elegant chamber.

The bed was lofty and canopied; the curtains were roſe colour ſattin, feſtooned by cords and taſſels of ſilver, and fringed with the ſame. The window-curtains, ſofas, and chairs, matched the bed. The

room

room was hung with large patterned flock-work paper, blue and white, the mouldings gilt—inlaid and japan cabinets and commodes, large looking-glaſſes, and a fine needle-work carpet, completed the furniture of this ſpacious apartment.

In the cloſet was a large and elegant toilet, with a beautiful ſet of dreſſing-boxes, and other ornamental trifles ſtanding upon it as if in preſent uſe. This cloſet was ſtill more adorned than Elinor's, but ſhe had neither time nor inclination to to ſurvey its various beauties minutely—Sir Gervas came to her and ſaid:

"My dear Elinor, I had no other reaſon for keeping this apartment and its ſacred contents a ſecret from you, but that I thought you would be afraid to ſleep ſo near the dead. You have found the way to them yourſelf; and now I beg,

my

my child, that you will be above nonſenſical fears of thoſe who cannot hurt you. *I* viſit them every day—can ſtay hours with them—let that give you courage.—You alarmed me by your falling—I heard the furniture move, and could not be eaſy till I came up to ſee what occaſioned ſuch a ſtrange rumbling—now I ſee all is ſafe—I will go to bed and warm myſelf, for I am very cold."

"My dear ſir, how ſorry I am that you were diſturbed! I hope you will not catch cold."

I hope not, my love, nor you neither. Take care of yourſelf; go into bed—you are lightly clothed, and have been up a long time.—Go to bed, my child.—I will now lock theſe doors once more—"

Elinor kiſſed her uncle's hand—he then faſtened the doors. Maria was faſt

aſleep

aſleep; Elinor went ſoftly to bed, and hoped ſleep would compoſe her ſpirits, which had been greatly confuſed and agitated by the adventures of the night.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

OBDURACY.

THOUGH Sir Gervas was apparently very much pleaſed with the lively and affectionate prattle of Maria during breakaſt; yet, when it was over, to the great ſurpriſe of Elinor he ſaid:

"Roger, you muſt take this child home before dinner, and tell her father that I cannot let him have the meadow, weſt of his houſe, for leſs than five pounds a year, as the hay it produces fetches me more. So, tell him, that after this crop is

is mown, if he likes to have it on thoſe terms, he may—or, if he chuſes to incloſe an acre or two towards the ſea, he ſhall have them ſomething cheaper."

"But then, your honor, ater incloſing um—what good will um do, when ſo be they be'unt nothing at all better than barren ſands? Lord help un! a may ſtarve a cow. But I'll be bound to ſay he will never feed any poor beaſt on it—your worſhip knows that well enough."

"Hold your prating, Roger—what is it to you what I know—ſay exactly what I tell you; do you hear?"

"Yes, your honor, yes, I will."

"Oh, my dear uncle, how can Mr. Conway afford to pay five pounds a year out of thirty? *You*, ſir, are very rich. Conſider his family, and how ſmall an income

come he has to maintain them. *Give* him the weſtern meadow—you will never miſs the produce of it."

"Why, hey-day! am I to be inſtructed by my ſervant, and a girl I keep upon charity? Do you think I am childiſh, and do not know what I am about? Give away the meadow, indeed! you, Elinor, have been finely taught, I ſee; and would bring me to beggary. But, remember, child, I have managed this eſtate for near fifty years, and am not to be told what to do with it now. All my tenants know my humour—I forgive no one their rent under any pretence whatever—If they cannot pay, they muſt turn out and make room for thoſe who can.—If I excuſe one, I muſt another, and my income would dwindle away to nothing. No no, they know what they have to truſt to, and it makes them induſtrious and frugal."

"But

"But ſickneſs, or ſome unforeſeen misfortune, ſir, may render a poor man unable to pay, who, by having a little time to extricate himſelf, or to procure aſſiſtance, might go on very well, and eſcape poverty. But if he is obdurately driven from his home, he may be plunged into an abyſs of miſery too dreadful to think of."

"May he ſo? very fine words, for a ſentimental miſs, who underſtands *novels* better than ſhe does the *world!* now, it happens that *I* am too well acquainted with the latter, to be biaſſed by the former; ſo, child, you talk in vain.—I find that you have been encouraged to find fault with your uncle by the Conways, who are artful, deſigning people. They are encroaching, and want to impoſe upon your good-nature and ignorance: but *I* am not ſo eaſily impoſed upon. They no ſooner ſaw you than they gave

gave you one of their children to bring home for me to keep, and perſuaded you to aſk me to give them the meadow. Fye! fye! if Conway is diſcontented with his ſituation, he may ſeek a better—I hired him to take ſome duties off my hands, that my age and fortune exempted me from—I did not hire him to people my eſtate; ſo I am not obliged to reward him for it—and, mind me, Elinor, if ever I know that you viſit at Grove-Houſe, or bring the Conways or their children to the Priory, I will never forgive you.—If you chuſe to remain under my roof, remember you muſt be obedient — my mother never contradicted me—my wife, who might have led me as ſhe pleaſed, beheld me with the eyes of love, and transformed even my faults to perfections.—How then am I to bear reproof and advice from *you*, a mere child—a baby—whom I have juſt taken into my houſe? fie, fie, Elinor, learn better."

Sir

Sir Gervas went into his chamber, and the afflicted Elinor took Maria up into hers. She preſſed the lovely child to her boſom and ſaid:

"Muſt I be denied this happineſs! muſt I never ſee you more, my dear little Maria! Am I forbid the ſociety of your amiable parents? I muſt not even reſtore you to them myſelf—ſweet child—how ſorry I am to part with you! cruel uncle! — Yet, I will be patient and obedient—"

"I wiſh you were coming with me, Miſs Clifford! I don't like to leave you, but I am very glad to go home to my own good papa: for, indeed, I do not love that croſs papa *much*, becauſe he is ſo often angry.—I muſt not forget my ſongs."

"You ſhall not, my love, I will roll them up for you. Something is yet in my

my power—can I ever beſtow it better! ſurely no.—Play a leſſon or ſomething, Maria, while I write a few lines—"

Elinor wrote thus to Mrs. Conway:

"Deareſt Madam,

"I am extremely ſorry that I cannot have the felicity of thanking you in perſon for your indulgence in permitting your dear Maria to viſit me. Happy ſhould I be, if I could keep her with me longer, as ſhe is as a moſt intereſting little companion! But the ſight of her awakened a painful recollection in the boſom of my uncle, whoſe loſt child your Maria greatly reſembles—duty, gratitude, and affection, forbid me to gratify my own inclinations at the expence of his feelings.

I find it is impoſſible for me to enjoy the pleaſure of ſociety, while I reſide at Clifford Priory, as my uncle ſeems to have

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an equal diſlike to my going out, and to my ſeeing company at home. I muſt endeavor to ſubmit patiently to ſhare his retirement; for, I can never hope to alter his habits or diſpoſition.

I flatter myſelf you will excuſe the liberty I take, in begging the favor of you to divide the incloſed trifle, as you think proper, among the fairies of the grove, as a very ſmall token of my affection for them.

I hope I ſhall often have the pleaſure of ſeeing them on the ſpot, where I was ſo happy firſt to find them.—I ſhall frequently walk that way, in the pleaſing expectation of ſeeing, not only them, but their amiable parents.——My ſincereſt friendſhip and my warmeſt wiſhes, attend Mr. Conway and yourſelf, and, though I dare not complain, yet I muſt *feel*, that to be denied a free intercourſe

with ſuch valuable neighbours, gives great pain to the heart of

your truly affectionate,

ELINOR CLIFFORD."

The generous Elinor took three ten pound notes from her little ſtock, and incloſed them in the letter, which ſhe put up with Maria's muſic and ſome favorite modern pieces of her own. She wrote a caution on the envelope in French not to open the pacquet before the ſervant, not wiſhing that Sir Gervas ſhould know of the *letter*, but above all of the notes, as ſhe feared his knowledge of ſuch a gift, would diſoblige him for ever.

Jenkins ſoon came up for the child, and ſaid:

"I do be comed for parſon Conway's little girl, his honor do ſay that I do be to take ſhe home, and he do be buſy, and

ont

ont be diſturbed to bid the little girl good bye; and he do deſire you not to go out on the Priory, dear Lady, 'cauſe ſo be he will call for you preſently."

Elinor perfectly underſtood this requeſt was made for fear ſhe ſhould go home with Maria, and, when ſhe was gone, as it was in every reſpect her with to oblige him, if ſhe could, ſhe ſat down to the harpſichord, and played ſuch pieces of muſic as ſhe knew he muſt hear, with her doors open, and by that means convinced him that his orders were obeyed, and *obeyed* without ill-humour.—Thus ſhe amuſed herſelf till dinner, and then ſtrove to be very cheerful, leſt he ſhould think ſhe was vexed at parting with her little companion, which in reality was the caſe. When Jenkins had removed the things, Sir Gervas ſaid:

"I am very well pleaſed, Elinor, to ſee you cheerfully comply with my will, which I aſſure yon *ſhall* be a law to all whom I take into the Priory. I ſhall now talk to you a little, and expect that you will hear me patiently:—in the firſt place, I muſt tell you, that you have acted very wrong. You go and make acquaintance without conſulting *me*—you bring a child into my houſe without my leave—and then you want me to give away my property to ſtrangers, becauſe, truly, you have taken a fancy to them. However, child, I will forgive you this time, becauſe I ſuppoſe your father let you do juſt as you pleaſed in *his* houſe, and manage both himſelf and his property. But *I* will not ſpoil you in that manner—no, no, I will take care of myſelf: you ſhall not ruin my fortune as you did his—no—nor ſhall you bring viſitors home to murder *me*. I will admit none of your faſhionable

able gueſts here, who will dine with me one day, and ſhoot me through the head the next. My nature is to live to myſelf, and for myſelf and my heirs. Be conformable to my ways, and you ſhall be rewarded for it in the end: but I will keep no beggars in my houſe, remember that—let me never hear about this perſon's misfortunes, or that perſon's ſickneſs. If I *give* to one, I muſt to *all*, and then I ſhould have my tenants a pack of idle good for nothing dogs, depending upon me for food, and not endeavor to earn it by honeſt induſtry, as they do now.—I am nearly repeating what I ſaid this morning, in order to impreſs it the deeper on your memory, and prevent your giving me any further trouble: for, it is ſurely ſufficient for you, Elinor Clifford, to be my niece, the deſtined heireſs of the Priory and my fortune, but do not expect to govern in the one, or to manage the other, before I am dead.—Do not forget this leſſon,

child—be an humble, dutiful niece, and you ſhall always find me an affectionate uncle."

Sir Gervas being weary with talking ſo much, ſoon ſettled himſelf to ſleep, leaving Elinor at full liberty to comment on the ſtrange obduracy of his diſpoſition. The drawers in her room were ſtill full; thoſe things which ſhe had given away being ſcarcely miſſed, and ſhe conjectured that the drawers and commodes in Lady Clifford's chamber and cloſet contained her wearing apparel and the child's, and Elinor could not help blaming, in her own mind, the great abſurdity of letting ſo many uſeful things lie untouched for many years, while there were diſtreſſed people in the world, to whom they would be ſerviceable. How many uſeful articles could ſhe ſend from her own quantity to Mrs. Conway and her little ones! but ſhe knew her uncle would be offended, if ſhe

ſent

ſent parcels to Grove-Houſe; therefore, ſtill longer muſt every thing lie, ſpoiling and uſeleſs, becauſe ſhe dared not to expoſtulate, even in the gentleſt manner, with Sir Gervas, on the injuſtice he was guilty of to the living, by paying a falſe and unneceſſary reſpect to the dead, in ſuppoſing the garments they had worn were too precious to be given to the poor. Yet, Elinor, though ſhe knew ſhe muſt be ſilent on the ſubject, could not reconcile ſuch a conduct either to humanity or religion, and was very ſorry that her uncle acted in this and on other occaſions ſo contrary to her ideas of both.

CHAP. XVI.

THE PACQUET.

WEARY with unpleaſant reflections, Elinor thought ſhe would go over to the farm to amuſe herſelf a little, but, as ſhe was going out of the room, ſhe ſaw a pacquet directed for herſelf lying on the table, which pacquet Sir Gervas had forgot to give her. Philip Hawthorn had left it with him before dinner—

Elinor's heart fluttered, as ſhe carried it up to her cloſet, and her hands trembled as ſhe unſealed the envelope, which contained a few affectionate lines from

Doctor

Doctor R., the next she read was as follows, from Lord Melvin to the Doctor:

"Sir,

As I was looking over some letters to my father, which he, being laid up with the gout, wanted me to answer, I was greatly surprised to find the inclosed pacquet addressed to you, by Sir Clement Darnley, which I imagined had been sent to you before we left England; but the the duke, by some neglect, brought it to Ireland with him: while you no doubt are blaming poor Darnley for his remissness in not writing. I hope the delay is not of any serious consequence, and am

Sir,

your obedient servant.

MELVIN."

Reserving the letter to *herself* for the *last*, Elinor read Sir Clement Darnley's to the Doctor, which ran thus:

"Dear Sir,

Your firſt melancholy letter, which I received only one day before the laſt, almoſt diſtracted me. I communicated the dreadful contents to my uncle, who, like a man of true honor, gave me his permiſſion to ſet out immediately for England to revenge the death of Mr. Clifford, and guard my angelic Elinor from further inſults. I was actually preparing for my return, when I was favored with your account of Felgrove's death, and Mr. Clifford's excellent letter to his daughter. His prudent arrangement for her ſafety calmed my mind, and a relapſe which my kind uncle had, I fear, in conſequence of his uneaſineſs for me, obliged us to proceed to Italy, where, when he is a little recovered from the fatigue of travelling, I am to leave him and fetch Miſs Clifford. Yes, my dear ſir, the cruel bar to my happineſs is removed! my uncle has ſhown me a letter from my father

to

to him, in which are theſe words—'When I made my will Clement was too young for me to judge of his diſpoſition; therefore, I thought it was my duty as a father to guard againſt too haſty a marriage. He has grown up ſo very ſenſible and diſcreet, that I will leave it in your power to annul that clauſe, whenever you think it will impede the happineſs I intended to promote. Gain his confidence, my dear brother, and, if, after he is one and twenty, you find that he is prudently attached, indulge his inclinations and make him maſter of his fortune, and let him bleſs a father who had only his happineſs in view, and who now, revoking the prohibition in my will, leaves him at full liberty to marry whenever you think proper to give your conſent—and may heaven bleſs him and the happy object of his choice prays his affectionate father.' Thus, my dear ſir, I am at liberty to

make the moſt amiable of her ſex my bride, when the period of *our* firſt mourning is expired—I ſay *our* as I mourn for Mr. Clifford as a ſon, and glory in the memory of ſuch a father. You tell me Miſs Clifford bears her troubles with fortitude.—Angelic ſufferer! may heaven preſerve her health!—O ſir! watch over her—comfort her.—But what am I ſaying? your own excellent heart, obeying the dictates of friendſhip and humanity wants not my prayers to excite it to every thing that is great and good. I wiſh ſhe were not to be at ſuch a diſtance from you. May ſhe find an affectionate protector in Sir Gervas Clifford, till I arrive! I will not deſire you to write, as, moſt likely, your letter would miſs me. My uncle's extreme danger made me delay writing, till I had conveyed him into purer air: the place where we now are is reckoned very ſalubrious—he is much better—

better—I am my dear ſir, with reſpects to your amiable family,

your obliged and
truly affectionate friend,
C. DARNLEY."

"Then, I may expect you, my Darnley! my *own* Darnley! unexpected happineſs!" exclaimed Elinor, as ſh opened the letter to herſelf, in which ſhe read theſe words:

"Dear Miſs Clifford,

Before you receive theſe poor expreſſions of what I have felt in being abſent from you, at a time when you required the tender conſolation of the moſt refined friendſhip and the pureſt love, I ſhall be on my return to England. O my Elinor! may I flatter myſelf that, ſanctioned by your revered and ever-to-be-regretted father, you will give me the glorious title of your protector? All de-

lays

lays on my ſide are done away. *How*—my letter to Doctor R. will explain.—I can now offer you myſelf and fortune, without reſtraint—why did I not know that I could do it ſooner! Had you been *mine*, what miſery would have been prevented! Had my uncle told me—had he been in England, he would have known my Elinor, and done all in his power to ſecure ſuch a treaſure for me. How unfortunately it has happened! and that *I*, who was almoſt an inmate at your houſe, when it was the abode of pleaſure and gaiety, ſhould be abſent, at the period ſo dreadful to my adored Elinor! My only conſolation is, that it was duty alone which called me from you. You knew it—you ſaw my pangs at parting with you, and nobly ſtrove to reconcile me to my fate. But that was impoſſible—I left you alone, and, even then, oppreſſed with afflictions. Yet, little did I think while I admired—while I

gloried

gloried in your fortitude, that you would ſoon be called upon to exert it by an event more terrible than the common moſt diſtreſſing incidents of life? could I think that Felgrove was—what he has proved himſelf to be? Oh! no; had I had but the leaſt ſuſpicion, I would *not* have left you—I would have ſaved your father's life, or, by my own death, have ſaved myſelf the pang of hearing *he* was killed.—Yet—I will not repine, if my preſervation can bleſs the future days of her for whom I would have died—and for whom alone I will live.

Pardon me, my Elinor! when I ſat down to write I intended to avoid every painful retroſpection — forgive me — I could not reſtrain my pen. I hope you do not find your ſituation at Clifford Priory diſagreeable. I have heard ſtrange accounts both of the Priory and Sir Gervas; but they were the tales of ignorance.

I have

I have not the honor to be perſonally acquainted with your uncle, though I have frequently been on his grounds. Perhaps you are not a ſtranger to the honeſt inhabitants of Milbrook farm. Your Darnley owes his life to their ſon's courage, and *their* care. Will you have the goodneſs to let them know that worthy ſon, my faithful Valentine, is in perfect health and begs to be remembered to all at the farm, with duty and affection. Poor Valentine will be as rejoiced to ſee the ſpires of Clifford Priory as I ſhall; for, he has left his heart with a fair couſin, whom I am ſure he longs to ſee.

If you are not already happy in their acquaintance, let me introduce you to my agreeable friends at Grove-Houſe, Mr. and Mrs. Conway. He belongs to the ſame college that I do, and is in every reſpect an honor to it. They are both perfectly ſuited to your taſte, in them you

you will find ſolid ſenſe, poliſhed by education, and manners that would adorn a court. This amiable couple is not poſſeſſed of what the world calls riches—no, 'all *their wealth* is *love*.' Connubial love! can I think of it without anticipating the bliſsful period when you, my beloved Elinor, will bleſs me with your hand—bleſs me with the moſt anxiouſly wiſhed for right of ſubſcribing myſelf not only your ardent and faithful lover—but alſo your tenderly affectionate

Huſband,

CLEMENT DARNLEY."

"Faithful, generous Darnley! happy Elinor! Oh! what a paradiſe will this, no diſmal, place, be, when he enlivens it by his preſence! yes, my Darnley, your preſence gave a brilliancy to the gay ſcenes of faſhion, even *they* appeared dull unleſs you were with me.—Why is he not come—theſe letters have been delay-

ed—

ed—it is above two months ſince they were written. What can detain him? Oh! why is he not here? Poor Mr. Darnley, perhaps, is very bad, and Sir Clement cannot leave him. I will not be uneaſy if I can help it. Why am I forbidden to ſee the Conways? how conſolotary—how delightful it would be, to converſe ſometimes with ſuch ſenſible friends! my Darnley loves them—he wiſhes me to cultivate a friendſhip with them—I *will* viſit them frequently, when my uncle is aſleep: he will not know it—or if he ſhould—I will tell him that Sir Clement deſired me to viſit them, becauſe they are his friends. Then, how can my uncle blame me, for obeying one to whom I ſhall ſoon, very *ſoon*, owe more obedience than I do to him? that thought however will juſtify my conduct in this point to *myſelf*, if it do not to *Sir Gervas*. So, to-*morrow*, I will go to Grove-Houſe—To day—directly—the parents who are anxious

anxious for their ſon, and the gentle Betſey, ſhall be made happy by the intelligence I have for them."

Elinor concluded her long ſoliloquy and went immediately to the farm. She read that part of Sir Clement's letter to them which concerned Valentine, but did not give them hopes of ſeeing him ſoon. Nor did ſhe chuſe to tell them how long ago the letters were written, as ſhe thought it a pity to damp their joy by fears that ſome accident might have happened to him ſince. She wiſhed to ſave her favorite Betſey from the uneaſineſs ſhe herſelf could not help feeling, and alſo from the anxiety of continual expectation, when Mr. Darnley's precarious ſtate of health might ſtill, for ſome months, detain Sir Clement in Italy, and the whole family were ſufficiently elated and happy, to hear that he and Valentine were ſafe and well.

When

When Elinor congratulated the bride and bridegroom on their marriage, Mrs. Hawthorn ſaid:

"Thankee, your dear Ladyſhip—aye, aye, and if ſo be Val comes, he and ſiſter Bet ont be long ater us, that um ont: for I knows brother Val will marry ſhe as ſoon as ever he do comed home, and then, if ſo be if his maſter will let un, mayhap he will take a farm juſt by for his ownſelf and Bet: and then, your Ladyſhip, we will be ſo happy all together! Phil and I, and Val and Bet—and father and mother—dear! dear! how happy we will be!"

"Yes, ſiſter Roſe; if ſo be our poor Valentine do but comed ſafe home to us. But alas-a-day! we can be ſure of nothing, till us do be ſo happy as to ſee un ſafe and hearty in our farm."

"Lawk!

"Lawk! Bet, you do be ſo full o'fears about un, fancying this, and fancying that—you do'unt be at peace night nor day, that you do'unt."

"Well! Roſe, and you oud be ſo feared as bad as me, if ſo be our Philip did be in a far diſtant land ayont ſea—and he, poor lad! did be feared enough about you, Roſe, when ſo be you did go in uncle's ſhip to Lunnun to fetch her Ladyſhip. Ah! deary me! how dull he did be 'cauſe you did not be here to laugh and play wi'un."

That's ſure enough, Bet; I didbe plaguy dolourſome wi'out my own merry Roſe. The places did'unt be like the ſame places, not a bit. We will not be parted now, my girl, never no more, that us ont—faith and troth I will go along wi' you—father ca'unt ſay nay to it now, can he Roſe?"

"May

"May be not, Phil: but I ont go never no more; home do be the beſt place o' all.—Now it do be Bet's turn to ſee Lunnun, if ſo be her dear Ladyſhip do go back agen; but I hope that ſo be ſhe will always bide at the Priory.—Yes, that I do, your dear Ladyſhip, ſeeing you do'unt be one bit feared o' goblins and paritions, no more than Sir Gervas his own-ſelf do be, and that may be, mayhap, 'cauſe you be one o' their own family like his worſhip."

Elinor mentioned Mr. Conway, of whom they ſpoke with the greateſt reſpect and affection, and gave her many little anecdotes that proved, notwithſtanding his ſmall income, he could give a part to the diſtreſſed. In ſhort, that he was a benevolent friend and a divine comforter to her uncle's pariſhioners. This excellent character made her revere him ſtill more, and ſhe moſt ſincerely wiſhed that

Sir

Sir Gervas would make him the rector inſtead of the curate.

Elinor returned, accompanied as uſual by the ſiſters and Philip. They found Sir Gervas ſeated on the ſtile; he had walked out to meet his niece, and was too weary to return without aſſiſtance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

PARSIMONY.

SIR GERVAS, who was very well pleaſed to ſee Philip Hawthorn, ſaid to him:

"Come, my good lad, and give me your arm: you muſt ſee me ſafe to my great chair, Phil; for I am quite tired. By the way, we will talk of the crops—a fine ſeaſon, my boy! I think I never ſaw a finer."

"There never did be better crops, ſince *I* can remember; they'll fetch more money

money a deal, your honor, than ever I ha knowed um for many a ſeaſon—and it do be a fine promiſing year for corn, your worſhip—and plentiful harveſts do make full bags and full bellies, that do be a true thing. Heaven bleſs little England! ſay I; it do be the beſt ſpot in all the varſal world, be'unt it your honor?"

"To be ſure, Phil, to be ſure; there is no place like it either in Europe or out of Europe. It is well worth fighting for, my lad; we will all help to keep away the enemies."

"So us will, your honor—no foreign feet ſhall trample upon our Engliſh ground—no, no, we will pelt um wi' red-hot balls down to the very bottom o' the ſea, if ſo be they comed a near to our coaſt."

"Well ſaid, my brave lad! ſpoke like a true Briton."

"Yes, yes, your honor; they ſhall find our Norfolk dumplings too hard for um and too hot into the bargen."

"So they ſhall, Phil; but it is my opinion, that they will not venture near enough to taſte them, for they know of old that our Engliſh food is too hard for their ſtomachs."

Thus did the Baronet converſe with the farmer, till he was comfortably placed in his eaſy chair, by a little bit of fire, which he was ſeldom warm enough to ſit without—Sir Gervas was very fond of Philip, and indeed of all the good people at the farm. They knew how to humour him, without being ſo ſervilely obſequious as to encourage his ſelfiſh diſpoſition, to the prejudice of his other tenants,

tenants, between whom and the Baronet Farmer Milbrook was very faithful and equitable, and in general contrived to give ſatisfaction to all parties. He was not the leaſt mercenary himſelf, nor did he bring up his children to be ſo: they were all ready to oblige Sir Gervas, and thought themſelves ſufficiently rewarded by his thanks and good-nature; for, the pleaſure he felt in having any ſervices performed gratis made him kind and agreeable.

When the young people were gone, Elinor told her uncle the contents of the pacquet, except a few particulars, one of which was Sir Clement's mentioning her returning with him to Italy, an idea that ſhe knew would give Sir Gervas as much uneaſineſs, as that of her going to Bengal. Nor could ſhe herſelf bear the thoughts of leaving him to be unhappy, though ſhe was to go with her Darnley,

who ſhe was ſure would not wiſh her to do any thing incompatible with the duty ſhe owed to her uncle.

For ſome time after Elinor had done ſpeaking, Sir Gervas ſat ſilently ruminating on what he had heard; at laſt, he ſaid very gravely:

"And when, Elinor, do you think that Sir Clement Darnley will come?"

"It depends intirely on his uncle's health, Sir; he may not come for a month, or he may be here this evening."

"This evening, child! this evening! you do not ſay ſo, ſurely—God preſerve me, what am I to do with him? I hope he will come alone, do you think he will come alone?"

"With his ſervants only, ſir."

"His

"His ſervants! how many will he bring? does he travel like a Prince?"

"No, my dear ſir, only as gentlemen generally travel. If he comes in a hired chaiſe, he will have his valet and one footman perhaps. If he comes in his own carriage, his coachman and a poſtillion muſt be added, I ſuppoſe."

"Coachmen, poſtillions, valets and footmen! the devil! what am I to do with them all? I have neither beds nor food for them—I do not keep an inn, child."

"Surely, ſir, among the number of rooms that there are in the Priory, *ſome* may be fitted up a little decently for the reception of Sir Clement, and what ſervants he brings with him."

"I tell you, Elinor, that there is not *one* room—no, not even for the young man himſelf—my wife and child are in the *beſt* room, can he ſleep by *them*? *you* are in the next beſt—and, unleſs he brings a ſpecial licence in his pocket, that I may marry you to him immediately, he muſt not ſleep with you—ſo, what is to be done with him? he ſhall not put me to any expence or trouble, I aſſure you—if he comes this evening, Roger ſhall tell him to go over to the farm, or to the neareſt inn."

"I hope you are not in earneſt, ſir—what! ſend him away from the Priory, without ſeeing him?"

"Why not? if he comes at night, I certainly ſhall. Can I be diſturbed with ſtrangers coming in and putting the houſe all of an uproar, juſt as I want to compoſe

compoſe myſelf and go to bed quietly? no, no, Elinor, it will not do—I expect that both you and the young baronet will ſtudy my humour, and conveniency in every reſpect—I ſhall pay you well for it in the end. Have patience with me, though I may be a particular old man, and I will reward you for it—but neither you nor he ſhall make me extravagant or put me out of my way."

"We ſhall not wiſh to do ſo, my dear uncle—but, ſurely, Sir Clement ought to be treated with politeneſs and delicacy, and not turned rudely from the door, though he *ſhould* come at an unſeaſonable hour. He does not know what early hours we keep at the Priory."

"Then he muſt learn to conform to them before he comes under my roof—delicacy and politeneſs indeed! do you expect me to ſacrifice my eaſe and my comfort,

comfort, and what is more, my money, to behave delicately and politely to a young fellow who is going to marry my niece, and be heir to my fortune? no, no, not I indeed—he ſhall take me as he finds me—and ſubmit to my plain country manners, for, I aſſure you, Elinor, *I* will not to his fine courtly ones; ſo, if he comes, he muſt take his chance. If it be the day-time, he ſhall come in: if night, he muſt go where he can, till the next day."

"If you will give me leave, my dear uncle, to look over all the apartments, to morrow, I am ſure I ſhall be able to get one ready for him, without putting you to the leaſt trouble or expence."

"How you teaze me, child! you do not know what you ſay—I tell you once more they are all too bad, and I will not have them opened. So, hold your tongue about

about it—Lord help me! I am only fit to live by myſelf; I had no plague at all, till you came—I was ſo quiet and tranquil, and now I am diſconcerted every day about one thing or other. Such confuſion does not agree with me, it makes me ill."

"I am very ſorry, my dear uncle—that *I* ſhould give you trouble. Yet, ſure, a little change is amuſing."

"No, child; not to old people, who have their ſettled habits: they like their days ſhould paſs on peaceably: they cannot bear to be ruffled and diſturbed. I have been ſo fatigued, and ſo vexed, that I believe I muſt go to bed without my ſupper—I have no appetite."

"It is very early, ſir; you will be reſted and compoſed preſently; do not let the thoughts of Sir Clement make you

you uneaſy, my dear uncle; he will not wiſh to be here if it is inconvenient to you—every thing ſhall be done by us both to render your life agreeable."

"That is impoſſible, Elinor! it cannot be done; no, no, the *agreeable* will never come back—my life at beſt can only be tolerable. I know you think me a very queer peeviſh old fellow—but if I *am*, it is age and ſorrow, Elinor, age and ſorrow, that have made me ſo—they are heavy loads, child—I was a gay young man once, like your Sir Clement—Heaven keep *him* from troubles ſuch as mine! come, come, no tears—let us be cheerful—I think I will ſit up to ſupper, on purpoſe to drink the baronet's health, and a happy meeting to you—let me ſee—is not Valentine Milbrook his ſervant?"

"Yes, ſir, he is."

"So,

"So, ſo, then we ſhall have another wedding at the farm: our pretty little Bet Bloſſom is to have him. He was a good lad—I hope travelling about will not corrupt him; yet, I am afraid he will not be the better for it, ſeeing it is ſo apt to unſettle the mind of a young man: I ſhall be very ſorry if Val does turn out a bad boy, becauſe it will be ſuch a grief to his poor parents, and I have a great regard for them."

"Sir Clement Darnley ſpeaks very affectionately of Valentine. I dare ſay he is a good young man, ſir.

"Yes, Elinor—but Sir Clement is a gay man of faſhion, and thinks very differently from plain honeſt farmers. *His good* and *their good* may be quite oppoſite—however, we ſhall ſee, we ſhall ſee—I know they think very highly of Sir Clement: but I ſhall neither mind them

them nor you. They know very little of the world, and you, poor thing, are in love, and make an angel of him, no doubt. *I* will judge for myſelf, and, if I think he will not make a good huſband, he ſhall ſeek a wife elſewhere; for, I will not let him have my Elinor of the Priory."

This determination did not give Elinor any uneaſineſs, as ſhe was ſure her uncle would like Sir Clement Darnley's captivating manners and ſenſible converſation, if he would let him reſide in the Priory, and be ſociable with him. All ſhe dreaded was, that Sir Gervas would give him a cold unhoſpitable reception, and oblige him to ſeek another abode. The inns were very diſtant—the farm-houſe had but a few ſmall chambers—the beſt of them not good enough, in her opinion, for her Darnley—Grove-Houſe had already ten inhabitants, and

ſhe

ſhe feared ſtill greater inconveniences would attend his being there. At laſt, ſhe reſolved, without ſaying any thing to her uncle or the domeſtics, to get up very early the next morning, and take courage, if ſhe could by any means contrive to open the doors, to examine all the uninhabited apartments in the Priory, and, if poſſible, make one of them ready for either Sir Clement Darnley or herſelf.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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